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THE THREE SISTERS

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THE THREE SISTERS.

Who hath woe? Who hath sorrow? Who hath contentions? Who hath babblings?

Who hath wounds without cause? Who hath redness of eyes?

They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine.

Look not upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth its color in the cup, when it moveth itself aright.

At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder.

PROVERBS xxiii. 29-32.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION.

Bear with me, dear reader, for saying one serious word in the gay holidays. Bear with me, that I pause a moment to listen, amid the grand diapason of joy, for the undertone, the low, unheard murmur, the half-suppressed wail of suffering, of poverty, sickness, and sorrow. It is that you may, amid your rejoicing, remember to relieve this. Christmas, while it comes to bring joy to all the earth, and really does augment the happiness of the prosperous—Christmas, the religious, the joyous festival, absolutely increases the sufferings of the poor. It comes at the season when want is most severely felt by them; it

brings out into the foreground the strongest points of contrast between their condition and yours. This contrast is felt in proportion to the ratio of descent in circumstances, from your state to that of the poorest street mendicant. We all know the force of contrast. That between the prosperous and the suffering is brought out in greatest strength just at this time. It augments the trials of the latter—they cannot escape it—the rich and the poor are too closely jumbled together in locality. Have you ever seen a poor woman walking through the crowded, lighted and merry market-house on Christmas or New Year's Eve? Drawn by a singular fascination to torture herself by the sight of luxuries that taunt her penury, of merriment that mocks her sorrows—ay, even of necessaries, of common good bread and butter—that assails her sense of smell, stimulating and tantalizing the appetite she cannot satisfy—have you seen her haggard cheeks, her hungry eye? If you have not, you have gone through the market with your eyes so dazzled by the light, ears so deafened by the merry noises, mind so intent upon the purchase of your turkey, that you have brushed and hustled past her at every turn, treading on her toes and crowding her into corners, unconsciously. If you had seen her you would have put a "loaf of bread and a pound of butter" in her empty hands—she had no basket there, and, for that matter, no business there. The contrast was brought out into strong relief. How do you think it felt to her? You did not feel it; if you had, you would have given her a chicken for her New Year's dinner, or lost your appetite

for your own. Have you ever seen, on Christmas or New Year's Eve, a poor little child looking wistfully, wistfully into the windows of a toy or pastry cook shop, knowing that none of all these fine things are for him? You will say, nonchalantly, that "toys and confectioneries are not the necessaries of life—children can do very well without them;" and so they can, if they never saw them, if they never saw other children have them; as it is, it is a privation—not the less keenly felt, because it is a mental and not a physical privation. It is the reality of the suffering by contrast that I wish to show. I do not wish to make you gloomy, but to be the means of making others glad. I do not wish to cast a cloud over your sunshine, but to send a ray of your sunshine to gild another's cloud. I want you to "remember the poor," emphatically in New Year's times, to "remember the poor you have always with you." I want you, just for the season, to forget the mooted question as to whether almsgiving is expedient. "Assuredly" it is expedient at New Year's times. It looks like a great expense to make all the poor neighborhood comfortable, as a whole—but divided, it is a mere trifle—for—listen! Every man and woman in good circumstances has his own or her own particular acquaintances among the very poor—they may not be daily companions, or very intimate friends—but you know them. A very small donation, inconsiderable when counted with the expenses of your year, would make the two or three needy acquaintances of each comfortable for the time, and equalize the enjoyments of New Year, and soften the

harshness, abate the friction of the temporarily exaggerated contrast. Now that you have swallowed the pill, you shall have the lump of sugar; now that you have dined on solid beef, you shall have the whipped syllabub: now that you have listened to the little sermon, you shall have the little story, and if any child should ask me with childish *naiveté*, "Is it true?" I can answer, every word is true.

CHAPTER II.

THE THREE COTTAGES.

It is a feature in our great sprawling village of Washington City that the ebb and flow of the tide of business is very great. The city, during the session of Congress, being busy as the busiest thoroughfares of New York or London, and in the recess of Congress looking as desolate as Goldsmith's "Deserted Village." This influence is felt from the wholesale merchant down to the plain needlewoman. All classes, from the proprietors of hotels down to the oyster horn-blowing boys, and from the printer down to the President are overworked during the sessions of Congress, and have very little to do in the interval. But our business is just now with the most unobtrusive of business people—a plain seamstress.

It was in the winter of 184— that Mrs. S——, the wife of Judge S——, Senator from Mississippi, had, like all Southern and Western ladies, come to Washington with a plenty of gold and nothing else—with the benevolent intention of patronizing our city by buying everything from our merchants, jewelers, etc., and having everything made up by our milliners, mantua-makers and seamstresses—and—perhaps, as there is a leaven of unrighteousness in all things—perhaps to get the latest fashions, which our dressmakers, etc., had got from the Eastern cities in expectation of their custom. Well, Mrs.

S—— had come; had accomplished an inconceivable amount of shopping, and was now at her wits' ends to find a mantua-maker at leisure to make up her splendid satins and velvets for the season. Mrs. Polk's reception was to come on and come off on Friday evening—to be followed on Saturday evening by a ball at Madam B——o's. This week and next week were to witness a succession of brilliant parties, to be given by the ladies of the foreign embassies, and by the ladies of members of the Cabinet.

The Mississippi belle was hurried, worried and distressed. It was absolutely necessary to have a different dress for each one of these different entertainments, and not a mantua-maker could she find at leisure, after having driven over two-thirds of Washington City. It happened to be during her tour among the mantua-makers that I left my card at her door. She called to see me the next day, and the cause of her distress broke through all the rather stately ceremony of a Mississippi morning visitor. I chanced to be able to do her and another a service. There are suburbs in Washington City that strangers seldom—that Senators' ladies never visit. On such a suburb I remembered to have seen a dressmaker's sign hung out at the neatest little two-story frame house, with the prettiest garden and yard that ever was seen. I knew from her remoteness from business localities that the woman could have only a moderate supply of work. I volunteered to attend the lady to her house. We set

off—there was no time to be lost. We arrived at the cottages.

I must describe that locality, for it was a right pretty place. It is the eastern slope of the Capitol Hill, as it gradually declines to the Anacostia River, reaching it at a couple of miles distance. In summer it is very beautiful, covered with thick, soft, green grass and dappled over with the shade of a few scattered and hoary forest trees, and with clumps of a newer and spontaneous growth of brushwood, and sprinkled here and there with very small white framed houses, with very large gardens. These are generally the property of day laborers in the navy yard and other poor but industrious and temperate men, who are enabled to build them by reason of the low price of lots in that section. (I have known lots to sell there at private sale, too, at a cent and a half a foot.) We, Mrs. S—— and myself, had traversed nearly half the distance between the summit of the Capitol Hill and the river, going straight east, when we came to a street, or rather a lane, for in summer the middle of it was green and untrodden as the margin of a brook. We turned up this lane, and in all its distance there were but three houses. I called them the three cottages. They were all in a row, but not very close together—there was abundance of space all around each. The group stood alone, but not solitary; there were sprinkling of white houses scattered all around. These three cottages were all small, two stories high, painted white, with green blinds, and each stood in the midst of a little garden of its own. The

house to which we were going was the first one in the row. I had never been there before. I had only discovered it in passing by. Now I noticed that, though all the cottages were neat, this was the neatest by far of the three. The paint of the house and of the fence was white as snow, and the brick walk that led from the gate up to the door was colored of a lively vermilion red. Three or four planks were laid across the street, and a mat actually laid outside the front gate to prevent visitors from bringing the least soil upon the clean varnished bricks of the walk. We went in and rapped at the door. It was opened by a small, slender woman, whose fair skin, flaxen hair and blue eyes were thrown into strong relief by her widow's dress of black bombazine. The inside of the house was a miracle of brightness and cleanliness, bright brasses, bright glasses and bright colors in the carpet gleaming through the shade. We passed into a back room, where the nice home-made carpet and neat paper blinds spoke volumes in praise of the little widow's industry and economy. Mrs. S—— soon opened her business, and found a very willing agent in the little widow, whose name we ascertained to be Fairfield. We soon concluded our visit and returned to "the city," as the neighborhood of Pennsylvania avenue is called par excellence. I went away, but did not soon forget the three cottages—they attracted, interested me—with their neatness, beauty and isolation. I had observed that the central one was a little shop, with jars of candy, tumblers of slate-pencils, stacks of clay pipes, tallow candles, ap-

ples, etc., arranged in the windows, but it appeared as yet too humble to boast a sign-board with the name of the proprietor. I saw no more of the cottages, however, until the spring, when, being hurried with work, I went to seek the little widow seamstress. I found the cottages snow-white in their green and blooming gardens, and the little widow, neat, busy and cheerful as ever. Very tired with the long walk, I sat an hour or two, and she, being very talkative, gave me the history of the cottages and their inmates. The history and its *denouement* was rather remarkable—I will give it to you in my own words for the sake of condensation.

CHAPTER III.

THE THREE SISTERS.

Mrs. Anderson had been left a widow with three daughters—Mary, aged twelve; Ellen, aged ten, and Lydia, aged two years. She supported this little family by carpet-weaving, a trade in which there was so little competition as to afford her an abundance of work and good prices. Mrs. Anderson had sent her children to a public school, where they had received a good common school education. More than this, she had saved enough money to purchase three lots upon that eastern suburb, where land was then cheap, though expected to rise in value. These lots she designed as dowers to her daughters. The eldest daughter, Mary, was married at seventeen to a young carpenter by the name of Fairfield. He built the first cottage in the row upon the lot assigned to the bride. He furnished it nicely, and the young couple went to housekeeping.

It was during the third year of their marriage, and when they were the parents of two children, that the second sister, Ellen, was wedded to a young man in the cabinet-making business. This marriage was not approved by the widowed mother. She opposed it long and determinedly, and only yielded at last to the tears and lamentations of her second daughter. There was something in Mr. Bohrer's face, expression and man-

ners that she did not like. It impressed all observers unfavorably, at least all observers except his maiden love, Ellen. Yet he was a handsome, black-eyed, laughing fellow enough, and perfectly unimpeachable in conduct. It was, perhaps, the intangibility of the cause of her prejudice that at last silenced the mother's opposition. Yet her instincts had not deceived her, as the sequel of our story will show. She gave him her daughter Ellen and her dower, the lot adjoining that of the Fairfields. He contracted with his brother-in-law to build him a cottage upon it. When it was finished, and soon after he had moved into it, the difficulty of procuring the thousand and one trifles in daily demand in housekeeping suggested to Bohrer the idea of opening a little shop in that humble suburb. He fitted up the front room with shelves, counter, etc., and laid in a small stock of family groceries, trimmings, and, in short, of all things that go to fill up a small country or suburban shop. He prospered in the little business, getting the custom of all the day-laborers around. It had been very well if he had only stopped there. But often on a cold Saturday night, when a laboring man would come in shuddering and blowing, and meet there one or two of his neighbors and fellow-laborers on the same errand with himself, namely, with his week's wages in his pocket to lay in his week's supply of family groceries, one or another would say:

"Bother it, Bohrer, why don't you keep something to drink?"

Bohrer had no scruples of his own. It was his wife's

and his mother-in-law's prejudices against the selling of alcohol that influenced him, but he had not the moral courage to say so.

"Oh-h-h!" he would reply, in his musical drawl, "we are not fixed up yet—we have no conveniences—wait a bit."

At last Christmas approached. On Christmas Eve every one of the day laborers who lived in the neighborhood assembled in the shop of Bohrer. All were merry—merry as they could be. They needed not the stimulus of alcohol. Yet they fancied that something was wanting.

"Set fire to you, Bohrer! why don't you keep something to drink?" inquired one of the men, with a sort of gay impatience. "Haven't you got anything to drink?"

Bohrer shook his head laughingly, but soon became thoughtful—seemed calculating.

"Just think of it," said another man, "if you had the needful on the spot my family could have some egg-nog to-morrow; but now we shall have to do without it, because we cannot get the brandy; for I do not care enough about it to trudge all the way up to Pennsylvania avenue for it—do you, Smith? Say!—perhaps if I can get company I will go up to Simms'. Will you go, Smith—will you, Adams?"

"No! oh, no!" replied both the men; "it is too far—it is too cold."

"Well, so it is, and we are very comfortable here," said the first speaker.

But Bohrer was leaning across the counter with his

elbow resting upon it, with the tip of his forefinger pressed upon his brow, in an attitude, and with an expression of astute calculation. There were from twelve to fifteen men in the shop, and others constantly coming in and going out, all willing to take a dram, all willing to buy liquor to take home to their families, but none caring enough for it yet to go a mile up in the city for it. These were his weekly customers. Many of them were now taking up their baskets to go home.

"See here, friends," said Bohrer, rousing himself, "I mean to have some first-rate spirits here in the holidays—all for your convenience—for the convenience of customers, you know."

"Very well!" "That's you!" "So do!" were the various exclamations with which this announcement was received by the merry set as they hurried away from the shop.

Bohrer was as bad as his word. The second day after Christmas he had a cask of brandy and one of whisky brought down, and as a part of the same policy, took out a license to sell it by the "dram." On New Year's Eve, when the laborers came to his shop, there was no lack of "something to drink."

They remained until nearly twelve o'clock, converting, or rather perverting, not only the shop, but the little back parlor, hitherto sacred to Ellen's privacy, into a scene of roystering festivity. They would shout the Old Year out and halloo the New Year in in glorious style.

Ellen sat there by the side of her baby's cradle, feel-

ing, but too gentle to look, far less to speak, disapproval of the scene. To Ellen there was something infinitely solemn and sweet in the last hours of the old year—the dying year. They were the last moments of an old man who had been a kind benefactor to her, and she could not be ungrateful or insensible at his death. That year, as its first donation, at its commencement, had given her her husband—that dear Wilhelm, or Willie, as she preferred to call him; and now, remembering and tenderly sensible of the gift, she could not rejoice that the giver was near his end. That year, near its close, had laid upon her bosom her first babe—the little Elly, now an infant of six weeks old, and slumbering in the cradle by her side. How could she sympathize with the mad revelers whose orgies made terrible the lingering moments of the old benefactor? She sat apart, alone, and rendered the grateful homage of a thoughtful and serious vigil. Ellen was not ascetic—no one could look in her earnest, tender, gentle face and accuse her of asceticism; yet to her the last moments of the old year seemed a time suggestive of devotion rather than of revelry. It was ten o'clock when the opening of the shop door, and the ringing of the bell attached to it announced a customer. Bohrer went forward, exclaiming:

"It is Frank Miller," and soon Ellen heard a cheerful, youthful voice sing out:

"Just come this evening—yes! just come; been to see Lydia, and found mother in a desperate fix for a pound of candles. It was too late for her or Lydia to venture

out, particularly when the streets are in such an uproar as they are to-night, and so I volunteered to do their errand."

"Well! Come in—come in," replied Bohrer; "we are keeping the season, you see! Walk forward."

"Oh, no, I thank you! I must hurry immediately back."

"Ay! but step into the back room a moment! We have some prime egg-nog—come, come!"

"Well—indeed, I am pressed for time."

"Nonsense! Pressed for time with a new instalment of time within a few hours of arriving. Come in, and see Ellen and the baby."

"Well, I should like to see that baby and to speak to Ellen a minute. I do not care if I do step in for just a moment," and the young man came forward into the little back room, where he was greeted by a half score of acquaintances. Shaking hands and passing laughingly through them all, he made his way to Ellen's side and sat down by her. She received him smilingly. Well she might! He was handsome, frank, affectionate, and the betrothed of her youngest and favorite sister Lydia. A little too impulsive, Ellen thought—a little too forgetful of past experiences, and too reckless of future consequences when tempted by the enjoyment of the moment—a little too ready to enter into any fun, or take part in any frolic that might be going forward; but so gay, so good-humored, so disinterested with it all that it seemed impossible to blame him. He was at this time employed

at a small salary as clerk on board of one of the steamboats that run from Washington City to Norfolk. The boat had just got up, and he had just arrived, as he announced.

"Come, take a drink, Frank! it will do you good!" exclaimed Bohrer, bailing out a large glass of egg-nog and handing it to him.

He received it, and, passing it untouched to Ellen, said, with a charming blending of affection and gallantry:

"Ellen! come—place your lips to the brim—consecrate the draught for me."

"No, Frank; I cannot."

"What! don't you like it?"

"I do not know whether I like it or not—I never tasted it."

"Well, then try—come!"

"No."

"Why not, Ellen? Are you a total abstinence woman?"

"Yes."

"Taken the pledge and all that?"

"No; I have taken no pledge, because I have not fallen in the way of taking pledges; but mother never was accustomed to use any kind of spirits in her family, and so we all rather dislike the taste and smell, or rather we dislike the smell, and we think we should dislike the taste."

"Lydia doesn't—begging your pardon—Lydia has more sense than any of you girls—she knows what's good. Why, the other night when our boat was out—you know

when I took Lydia to hear the Ethiopian serenaders?—when we came out it was so cold—it was so cold, and we had so far to walk, that as it was but ten o'clock I took her into Jones' confectionery, and into the back parlor, where it was warm and comfortable, and I ordered a couple of glasses of noyau and some cakes. The whole thing was perfectly new to the little creature, and she enjoyed it, I tell you. We spent an hour there. Oh, it was nice—cozy! The bright coal fire glowing through the polished steel bars of the grate, and the soft cushionery carpet, and the spring, elastic chairs, covered with red cut velvet, and the pictures and the mirrors. Little Lydia felt herself in a palace. She examined all the pictures—looked at herself in all the mirrors—sat down in all the chairs in succession to try them, and found each one more comfortable or luxurious than all the rest. Her verdant pleasure was perfectly refreshing to me, who am quite accustomed to those things," said the youth, with the self-satisfied air of a man who had seen and been satiated with life, and who was inclined to patronize young people.

Ellen was looking at him and listening to his words with an air of grave rebuke. But he did not perceive her disapproval. Ellen's serious disapprobation was so gently, so delicately manifested that none but a very close observer could see it, none but a very sensitive person feel it.

"And how," she gently inquired, "did Lydia look back

upon this evening after the excitement—for it seems to me that her pleasure was excitement—was over?"

"Delight-edly!" laughed the young man, with great glee. "It was fun alive to see the little one. Every time I have taken her out of an evening since, whether to meetings, or lectures, or exhibitions, or what not—in coming home Lydia has surely become hungry or thirsty, or cold, or tired—always! And I have laughed in my sleeve and taken her into a confectioner's—and, by the way, I wish we had her here to-night; she would help drink this," said Frank, as he sipped his egg-nog.

"But, Frank," said Ellen, speaking very gently, in a low tone—speaking evidently with reluctance—"does not the idea of a young girl loving wine and cordial strike you unpleasantly—does it not revolt you, as something" —she hesitated for a softer, kinder word, but finding none, went on to say—"does it not revolt you as something coarse and sensual?"

"Now, Ellen, see her—now don't—I can't listen to 'coarse,' and that other worse word, put in the same sentence with Lydia, much less applied as adjectives to anything she says, does, or thinks! Lydia is my business; I do all I can for her now, but when we are married, please God, I will do everything for her—she shall have just exactly everything she wants—let it be what it will! Bless your soul, I want Lydia as a medium of happiness; the only way I can enjoy life in its highest is through her! To see Lydia's bright, bright eyes shining down on the glass of wine at her lips—shining down on

it as the sun shines down upon a clear lake—lighting it up! To see Lydia eat a bon-bon, as if her fresh, rosy lips had a separate consciousness! To see Lydia sink into an easy chair, with such beautiful abandonment! She enters into all these little treats with such intense relish!"

"Lydia has been unaccustomed to luxuries. Our mother brought up all her children plainly. These things are new to her, and she is very young—that is her only excuse."

"Excuse! I wish you would not talk so, Ellen? She needs no excuse! But there! it is eleven o'clock, and here have I been, forgetting that Lydia and her mother are sitting at home in darkness waiting for the candles, while I have been dawdling my time away, and keeping you up, too, I dare say."

"No, you are not keeping me up. I intend to stay up till these people are shamed into going home. I must do that. I cannot leave Wilhelm here to tempt others, and be tempted himself into any greater excesses. But you, Frank—you must go home; you are very thoughtless."

"Thoughtless! So I am; so I intend to be. I never saw the use of being thoughtful, except to turn the hair gray. But how have I been thoughtless, I pray?"

"Why, here you have sat, keeping your sweetheart out of the necessaries of life, while very sincerely hearing yourself talk of providing her with all the luxuries—that

is like you, Frank; you are a very earnest promiser, but a very uncertain performer."

In reply to this, Frank stooped down and kissed the baby in the cradle, and ran from the room, pausing in the shop to take a second and a hasty glass of egg-nog.

CHAPTER IV.

GOING TO HOUSEKEEPING.

Every one loved Frank Miller—it was impossible not to love him. Every one—that is, of his own neighborhood—took an interest in his approaching marriage. It was to come off early in the year, and the young couple were to reside with the mother of the bride for a few months, until their house, the third one in the row, could be completed and furnished for their reception. As this was the marriage of her youngest, her favorite, and her last remaining daughter, the old lady determined to go to the expense of a wedding, and invite all the neighborhood to it. The unpretending trousseau of the bride had been ready a month before, and so the last week previous to the marriage had been devoted by the little widow to preparation for her guests. The day previous to the wedding she was very busy frosting cakes and shedding tears; yet, with a mother's generous self-devotion, concealing, or trying to conceal from the little bride-elect, the secret pain she was suffering at the thought of giving up her last and best beloved daughter, her baby, her pet, her spoiled child, she dodged and avoided Lydia as much as she could, and dropped her quiet tears into the baskets of fruit or plates of cake. A remorseful tenderness weighed down Lydia's eyelids also, as she busied herself in her chamber with the smaller details of her dress, and

sometimes she would trip downstairs to embrace her mother, and to assure her that no change of her own relations should or ever could abate her love for "mother."

"But will you love me as well afterward, mother? Won't you soon grow to look upon your child as an old married woman, absorbed in commonplace family cares, who does not need your care and your petting?"

"Ah! but, my baby, Frank will love and pet you, and then you will not care for my petting."

This was said in a voice of assumed playfulness, but the undertone of sadness moaned up through it.

"Mother! sit down and take me in your lap. Dear mother, no one can supply your place to me—no one can fill your chamber in my heart, or crowd you out of it, or come near it, mother! it is so sacred! It is the chapel of my heart—my mother! Stroke my face, mother—play with my hair—kiss me—mother, kiss me, never mind the cakes to-day, mother—do, never mind the cakes, mother, for once. Love me, mother—my heart is nearly breaking just now! I wish I were not a woman, with a woman's wants and responsibilities. I wish I could always have been your baby, mother." And the fair bride burst into tears. Her mother rocked and soothed her, just as though she had been a little child, and spoke to her cheerfully.

"Frank is a good—a very good young man—and he loves you, darling."

"Ah, mother, I do not find fault with Frank—he is good—of course he is; but, mother, there is something,

a nursing tenderness in your affection that I do not find in any other. Frank loves me as a boy loves a girl, with more fun and frolic than tenderness, and you, mother! oh, won't you be so lonesome when I am gone?"

"My darling!" said the mother, gently; "this is morbid in both of us—this is very weak, and we must not give way to it. No, I did not say our love was weak, our caresses were weak, my nursing you was weak," murmured she, as Lydia made a movement to leave her arms; "I said, my dear, this crying is wrong, ungrateful to Providence. We must not indulge in sentimentality. Mother must try to remember that she gains another son, not loses her last daughter.'

"Oh, mother, but why cannot we both, Frank and I, live with you, or you with us? Why should a daughter, when she is married, have the cloud of separation from her mother thrown over the sunshine of her bridehood? Sons don't mind it, but daughters do—oh! so much! and it is such a useless shadow! Why cannot people live in great houses big enough for two or three families, and when their daughters are married keep them still at home—and when their sons are married, let them go live with the parents of their brides? It seems to me it would be so much better than to have these cruel partings. There is seldom on earth more than three generations at a time, and it does seem to me that one large house should be big enough to hold them. It would be so nice, the grandparents, and the children and grandchildren, all

united together in a band of household love. So beautiful! Oh! would it not be?"

"My baby, you talk like a young girl."

"But would it not be, now?"

"Perhaps so—sometimes I think so; but maybe I am only selfish when I think I am right."

"Here are you, poor, dear, lonely mother, who have toiled through all your best days, laboring hard to raise your children, to see them go, one after another, and to be left alone in your age. Mother, listen! Frank is young, and I am young; it will not break our hearts, either, if we are not married; if now you repent your consent to part with me, you may now recall it! Mother, indeed I am in earnest. You ought to have one daughter left to you. I never felt it before, but you ought—ought. It is only justice—bare justice! Tell me, mother, if you don't want me to leave you, I won't leave you. I won't get married. Poor Frank! indeed, I won't, poor, dear mother!"

"My little one, you would cut your heart in two, and give me and Frank each a half, if you thought it would make us happy, I have no doubt in the world!"

"Shall I, mother?"

"Cut your heart in two?" asked the widow, playfully, to make her cheerful.

"La, no, mother!" smiled Lydia, through her tears; "I mean, shall I not leave you—shall I not get married?"

"My dear, you make me a proposition that both of us would regret next week if I accepted it to-night. No,

love, you must be married—never mind mother's loneliness. She will come over and take many a sociable cup of tea with you, and you and Frank shall come to her often."

"Oh! yes, mother," exclaimed the childish bride, her thoughts springing off into gleeful anticipation; "and you shall have such a nice little bedroom when you want to stay all night—it shall be called 'mother's room.'"

"There! now go, my darling, and finish trimming your dress, while I frost these cakes, and mind, come down to tea with a pleasant smile. Frank will be here to tea, you know!"

"Oh, yes, so he will!" exclaimed Lydia, kissing her mother and tripping away upstairs. The widow dropped her head upon her hands a moment in silent prayer, and rising, went about her work.

The next evening the wedding came off. The widow's little sitting-room and parlor were filled to overflowing with guests.

The bride was beautiful, as all brides are stereotyped (not daguerreotyped—that is another matter) to be. The bridegroom was happy, and awkward to the last possible degree, so that Frank was in danger of losing his character for gay indifference. The company were cheerful, and enjoyed themselves as only working people can enjoy a festival. The refreshments were abundant. The old lady had provided tea and coffee, but no wine or cordial. This deficiency was, however, supplied in the course of the evening by Bohrer, who, judging his mother-in-law

by himself, fancied that the only reason of its absence must arise from her parsimony. Exhilarated by the occasion, the company, lights and good cheer, he caught a generous fit, and manifested it in his own peculiar manner, by running "over to the shop" for a demijohn of cordial. In the course of the evening Mrs. Anderson had an opportunity of perceiving for the first time a weak tendency in her new son-in-law—a somewhat alarming love of alcoholic stimulus.

CHAPTER V.

THE LITTLE HOME.

The young couple passed the winter months with the mother of the bride. As soon as the spring opened Frank engaged his brother-in-law, Mr. Fairfield, to build for them a small, two-storied frame cottage, upon the third and last lot in the row. This cottage was upon the same simple plan of the other two, with its neatly laid out garden behind, and its flower yard in front. All the leisure time of the young bride and bridegroom were now bestowed in laying out and planting beds of kitchen vegetables or parterres of flowers, so that about the time at which the house was completed the flowers and the table vegetables were beginning to grow.

Mrs. Anderson had announced to Frank her intention to furnish their house, and when it was finished she set out with Lydia to choose the furniture. The mother's devotion and the daughter's thoughtfulness were made manifest that day. They went first to Griggs', and inquiring first for chamber furniture, were shown complete sets of all prices, from common, plain stained pine to the most highly finished rosewood. But one set struck Lydia's fancy. Very beautiful it was, indeed, and certainly very cheap, yet too costly for their circumstances. The set consisted of a French bedstead, bureau with swinging mirror, wardrobe, washstand, cabinet and

chairs, all pine, but painted pure white, and so highly varnished as to resemble porcelain.

"Oh, mother, look! this is beautiful! this is lovely! Do get this! What is the price of this, Mr. Griggs?"

"Eighty dollars for the whole set, madam—very low. We make next to nothing by them."

"That seems a great deal of money, but, indeed, they are worth it. Mother!"

"Well, my dear?"

"I like this white set—come," said she, drawing her mother away into a corner; "I do want that set so much, mother. They will look so beautiful, all pure white as they are, arranged in my chamber, with a straw matting on the floor, and with white dimity curtains at the windows, and a white Marseilles counterpane on the bed. Buy this, mother!"

"My dear, it will cost very much more than I had calculated to spend upon chamber furniture."

"Oh, well, dear mother, just you buy this and no more; let Frank purchase the rest of the things needful."

"But, my love, Frank has already contracted debt for lumber to build your home, and he owes, also, for the work. Frank must not be called upon to spend much!"

"Oh, but, mother, I will economize—indeed, I will."

"My dear, I have tried all that, and I know by bitter experience how it works. You can never make up by after economy for past extravagant expenditure. My dear, take this along with you as a safe rule: Always, if

possible, economize before an unusual expenditure—attempts at retrenchment afterward are usually failures."

"But, mother, to come back to the subject of this chamber furniture. I shall never be contented with dull, red pine bedsteads and bureaus, now that I have seen this beautiful set, looking like the finest white porcelain! Mother, I have the picture of a pure, clean, sweet chamber, to the realization of which this white furniture is needful—is positively necessary; and I cannot do without it!"

"You shall have it, my love."

"Dear mother, how I thank you! I know and feel that I am selfish in this, and that you are self-devoted—are magnanimous! Yes, mother, I know how naughty I am, without being able to be anything else but naughty."

The mother sighed. The daughter looked up with interest—with an expression of pain crossing her features.

"Dear mother, do you think me very selfish?"

"Lydia," was all she said, in a tone of perplexed sadness. She saw the tendency to selfish indulgence in the young woman, and while too conscientious to disclaim her knowledge of the fault, she lacked the moral courage to rebuke it in the daughter whom she was so soon about to lose.

The purchase was made, and the furniture sent home. It was Mrs. Anderson's disposition to do everything she undertook thoroughly. Lydia's house was furnished with everything needful to comfort, even down to the minutest

details. And then the bridegroom and bride removed into it.

Very sadly felt the old lady when left in utter solitude. She had gone home with the young couple, had remained to tea, and returned home immediately after. Very lonely it was to go to bed in the silent house; very lonely to rise and get breakfast for one; very sorrowful to eat that meal in solitude, and to feel that this was the first day of many years of loneliness, unless—as a secret hope whispered her—unless one of her three sons-in-law should invite her to take up her residence in his family. It was a dreary prospect to grow old alone in that house—in that house where her toil had been sweetened by the society of her children; in that house whose walls had echoed the glad shout of their infancy, and the music-laughter to their girlhood, when they loved only "mother"—that vacant, silent, cold house! This was the first painful feeling consequent upon the marriage of her last remaining daughter, but this in time wore off, as she grew accustomed to her solitude.

A want of reflection and of frankness is frequently the most fertile cause of misapprehension and misconstruction among relatives and friends. This was the case with Mrs. Anderson and her family. She was loved as one of her gentle and unselfish nature was sure to be loved; yet, engaged as her sons-in-law were in hard work every day, and coming home fatigued as they did every night, thinking only of business in the morning, only of fireside enjoyments in the evening, they did not reflect upon, or sym-

pathize with the peculiar griefs of the forsaken mother. They barely knew that she was alone—they did not feel it; if they had, there would probably have been a rivalry as to who should have received and monopolized the company of the mother. On the part of her daughters a fastidious—perhaps you will think a morbid delicacy inherited from their mother—kept them from making known their secret wishes upon the subject. Affairs went on in this way for a year succeeding the marriage of Lydia, and I do not know how long they would have continued to misunderstand each other, had not one of those providences of domestic life adjusted their difficulties. Lydia was expecting to become a mother, and the little, self-indulgent creature grew every day more unwilling, and, therefore, incompetent to do her little housework. Frank proposed to hire a girl, but Lydia, with what Frank, in his indulgent love, called her "pretty petulance," could not bear the idea of a stranger in the house. Frank, whose greater affection gave him more acuteness upon the subject of his young wife's wishes than either of his brothers-in-law possessed—Frank knew that she wanted her mother, and heroically set himself to what he honestly supposed would be a herculean labor, namely, the task of persuading "mother" to leave her own comfortable little rough-cast house where she had lived for thirty years and to take up her abode with them. It was beautiful to observe how Frank went about it, with his modest and graceful embarrassment; and it was charming to see the quiet joy of the mother when she per-

ceived that, so far from being selfishness, it was humility that prevented her favorite son-in-law from making this proposition until impelled by the new force of his little wife's wishes. Mrs. Anderson made Frank happy by at once acceding to his proposal, and the young husband returned to surprise his wife with the joyful intelligence that her mother was coming to live with them. That was a happy evening at Rose Cottage. "Mother" came over to take tea, and settled the preliminaries of her removal. The house was very small, containing only two rooms, a parlor and kitchen, on the ground floor, two bedchambers above, and an attic; but it was large enough for them. The front room upstairs was Lydia's pure white chamber; the back room was to be fitted up for "mother," because it overlooked the garden and poultry yard, that mother would always feel interested in; because the staircase led from this room to the attic, where mother could bestow the accumulated domestic treasure of years, treasures in the shape of patchwork, carpet-balls, etc., and, finally, because it contained numerous closets and cupboards for mother's bottles of oils and essences, and jars of jelly, etc., etc.

All these matters were discussed and arranged at the tea-table. It was now the first of December. It was settled that Mrs. Anderson should receive all her children under her roof once more upon Christmas Day, and should then remove to Rose Cottage in time for a New Year's family party to be given by Lydia. Having con-

cluded all these preliminaries, the old lady returned home late at night attended by Frank.

In a few days it was rumored among the sisters that "mother" was going to live with Lydia, and a generous rivalry was excited. Fairfield, the husband of Mary, and the senior son-in-law, waited on the old lady, and said, in his open way, that if he had had any suspicion that Mrs. Anderson intended to break up housekeeping, he and Mary should have hastened to put in their claim to her company at their own house.

"And, indeed, you know, mother," he argued, "it is our right—we are the eldest; you slight us, you neglect us, to pass us by and settle with little Lydia."

"But, for the very reason you advance as an objection, for her youth, Lydia needs me more than either of her sisters."

Fairfield used both argument and persuasion, but without effect. He reported his failure to his wife and to Ellen, who took supper with them that evening. The next day found Ellen at her mother's house upon the same errand.

"I cannot, like Fairfield and Mary, by the rights of primogeniture, claim your justice, mother; nor can I, like little Lydia, through helplessness, appeal to your mercy; but I do desire a share of your society, mother, and I have come to ask you if it would not be well to divide your time between us, living four months of the year with each of your children in rotation."

"My dear Ellen, an old woman like I am needs a set-

tled home—not alone—that is too dreary; but a settled home with one of her children. This moving about will not do for me. I have decided to abide with Lydia, because she needs me. I will see you and Mary as frequently as I can besides, and you must all of you come to me at Christmas, that I may have all my children once more beneath my own roof."

The Christmas party came off, and after it was over Mrs. Anderson began her preparations for removal. The greater part of her household furniture, together with her garden implements and her poultry, were divided equally among her daughters. The cow, the favorite white bantam chickens, and the old tortoise shell cat were sent in advance of herself to Lydia's. The rough-cast house, which was very small and very old, was let out at a small rent, and by New Year's Eve the old lady was at home with her favorite daughter.

CHAPTER VI.

NEW YEAR AT ROSE COTTAGE.

Frank and Lydia had invited all their sisters and brothers, with all their children. There were John and Mary Fairfield, with their three boys, Sam, William and little Harry, and Wilhelm and Ellen Bohrer, with their two beautiful little girls, Susie and Bessie, and a merry New Year's party they made, now that their little excitement of rivalry had subsided—a merrier, happier party than they were ever destined to form again—no presentiment of that fact, however, shadowed the brightness of their spirits or dampened their mirth. As soon as supper was over the old lady, fatigued with the unusual exertions of the day, was comfortably ensconced in a large armchair by the side of the glowing grate, and her grandchildren crowded around her for caresses. Her attention was thereby abstracted from the general company, and it was not until the hour for breaking up arrived, and the party had dispersed that a terrible fact was made known to her in this manner: She had observed that Frank had kept his seat through all the bustle of the departure, and ascribed his inertness to indisposition. After seeing the last guest depart she returned, and, going up to Frank, inquired how he felt. He was sitting with his back against the wall, with both his feet lazily extended, with his hand idly thrust into his breeches pocket, and his head,

with an expression of driveling, idiotic complacency, bowed sideways upon his breast. He looked up with the stupid stare, and replied in the maudlin tones of intoxication:

"Jolly, old gal!"

The widow clasped her hands together and gazed at him in deep distress, and, without one word of comment, turned away—turned away to see her daughter weeping bitterly. Lydia was seated in a chair accidentally drawn up to a table, upon which her arms and head were thrown in the abandonment of grief, and sobs such as only burst from an almost broken heart were convulsing her bosom. The widow approached her—took her hand. At this touch of affection, of sympathy, Lydia only sobbed with greater violence. Her mother drew her softly away into the next room, and seating herself, took her in her arms.

"Oh, mother! mother!" gasped Lydia; "I thought to have concealed this from you, and you have found it out! Oh, mother, do not think too badly of Frank! poor Frank!"

"Is this the first time this has happened, child?"

"Oh, mother, do not ask me! please don't!" sobbed Lydia anew.

The mother now understood that if this intoxication were not habitual, it was also not unprecedented.

Lydia now arose from her mother's embrace and returned to the other room, where she found her husband in the heavy insensibility of drunkenness. Lydia stood over him—spoke to him. He did not reply. She put her

arms around him and spoke very earnestly, close to his ear, begging him to get up and go to bed. He replied to that gentle touch and tone with a stupid grunt. It was impracticable for that delicate young woman in her feeble condition, even with the help of her mother, to raise and assist him upstairs to bed; yet she could not leave him there. It was impossible to look upon that fine, athletic, manly figure, doubled up into shapelessness in the beastly torpor of drunkenness; upon those handsome, youthful features, fallen into an idiotic imbecility, and to leave him there.

"Go to bed, mother!—go to bed, dear mother. I shall remain here until I can get him upstairs—poor Frank! Oh, mother, what a termination to our festival! What a reception for you! Alas! what a night this is! Your first night under our roof! You will be going away to-morrow, mother—will you not, mother?"

The old lady set down the night-lamp, put the extinguisher on it, and resumed her old seat in the armchair.

"Ain't you going to bed, mother?"

"No, my dear."

"But, mother, you must—you will be ill. Do go to your room."

"My child, don't torment me. I shall sit here as long as you do. I could not sleep, Lydia—how could I, with the knowledge that you were alone with this—this man, down here?"

"Poor Frank! Mother, please don't call him a man, and he so good to us, too. Oh, mother, you will dislike

Frank now, and you will be leaving us again. I am so much afraid you will!"

"No, my love, I do not dislike Frank. I pity him, sorrow for him and for you, and I will remain with you and do all I can to win him from this dreadful, dangerous, fatal habit! Have you ever spoken to him about it, Lydia?"

"Oh, mother, no! It has not very often happened, and when it has, and when it is over, upon the next morning poor Frank looks so downcast, so mortified, that I could not, to save my very life, say one word to him about it; on the contrary, I try all I can to make him think that I did not perceive it, or did not think much of it, or do not remember it. I try to make him forget all about it, and to restore his cheerfulness. He is so handsome and good when he is in good spirits, mother, and it is so dismal to see him suffer, poor fellow! by his severe self-reproach!"

"You want moral courage, Lydia. Lydia, one of the most important, and one of the most painful offices of true affection, is to remonstrate with our friends against their dangerous faults and foibles. You feel that, Lydia, in the case of your husband; but, Lydia, listen! I have known a mother, through an excess of false tenderness to her child, lack the firmness to give it the necessary bitter drug that would have saved its life. Sooner than afflict her child with a momentary inconvenience, she has run the risk, and has seen it die. How severe must have been the self-reproaches of that mother, Lydia! You,

Lydia, from the fear of giving your husband an instant's pain, refrain from assisting his self-judgment by your sympathy in that. Lydia, you or I must speak to him to-morrow."

"Oh, mother! I cannot! cannot! and you, mother! please never think of it! Oh, mother, please do not even look as though you noticed it, much less speak of it. Please don't! please don't! Poor Frank! he will feel badly enough without that!"

"Again I say, you lack moral courage, Lydia. Lydia! do you know, have you ever seen the ultimate effects of habitual intoxication? Have you ever seen men bloated, decrepid, ragged, reeling through the streets? Have you ever seen the families of such men?"

"Oh, mother, you can never think that Frank—oh, gracious Heaven, no!—you never meant that!" And Lydia exhibited such acute distress that her gentle mother immediately changed the subject. At last, however, Lydia herself resumed by saying: "But, mother, as you wish me to set my face against this drinking, and to remonstrate upon the subject with Frank, it occurs to me to say that I have heard of some husbands who have been driven into greater excesses by the reproaches of their wives—may there not be a danger of that in this case? May not Frank, humiliated in his own estimation by my attempts to reform him, plunge into dissipation of which he is guiltless now?"

"My dear! no!—for this reason: you will 'speak the truth in love,' as it must be spoken, to do good. All the

difference in effect lies in this: The truth, spoken in anger, scorn, reproach, or love. You will speak the truth, not in anger, not in scorn, not in reproach, but—in love. Do you mark the difference?"

"Yes, mother, but I hate to do it; I am afraid I should not do it rightly; I am afraid I should be misunderstood; I am afraid that I should give offense, and do harm. I am very reluctant to undertake it."

"That delicate reluctance, my dear, insures that you will do it rightly, if you summon the usual force to overcome it. Now, Lydia, Frank is so sound asleep that, although we may not be able to carry him up to bed, we can lay him on the sofa and cover him up." This was soon effected. "And now, Lydia, you must go to bed—you are too feeble for this great tax of anxiety and loss of sleep —come!"

Lydia yielded to her mother's persuasions and retired to rest. She, with her childish elasticity of spirits, soon threw off her burden of grief and fell into a deep, refreshing sleep. Not so the mother. Other causes of uneasiness besides the newly-discovered habits of her son-in-law drove sleep from her eyelids. One of these was the utter unfitness of her daughter to cope with the difficulties of her position. Affectionate and benevolent even to fatuity, Lydia could never by word, look or gesture, bear her testimony against evil in any one whom she loved. She was at once very thoughtless and very sensitive. She was evidently too unreflecting to comprehend the full degree of danger in which her husband stood, and

withal so tender-hearted, so delicate in mind and body, that it seemed an ungracious, and, just in her present condition, an unsafe task to let her into the secret of his great peril. The widow's tortured brain seethed with thought all night; she arose in the morning with a severe headache. She fell upon her knees and offered up her morning prayer, beseeching God to give her strength and wisdom for her new and hard duties. Calmed by this prayer, she dressed herself and went below stairs. Lydia was already there engaged in getting breakfast.

"Where is Frank, my daughter?" asked the old lady, looking around and missing him.

"He has walked out, mother—he feels so badly, mother! Say nothing to him to-day."

The widow did not reply. Soon breakfast was placed upon the table, and in a few moments Frank entered, looking very sorrow-stricken and ashamed—nodded a "good-morning" to his mother-in-law, and seated himself pensively at the foot of the table. Lydia's manner was unusually tender and attentive to him. He seemed to feel this, and in some degree to sink under it.

It happened to be the Sabbath, and too early as yet for church, so that when breakfast was over and the table cleared away, and when Lydia had gone upstairs to make up her bed, Frank, instead of going out, drew a chair to the fire, rested his elbows on his knees, dropped his head upon the open palms of his hands, and gave himself up to bitter reflections.

Mrs. Anderson stood looking at him sorrowfully for a

few moments, and then going up to him, took the chair by his side, and taking his hand in hers, said, with great tenderness: "Frank, my son, I am a very old woman; I am sixty-five years old, and have suffered and lived through much. Have I not earned the privilege of speaking with affectionate freedom to the youthful of my own household?" Frank neither replied nor looked up. "Frank, I have known you ever since you were an infant in the arms. I promised your widowed and dying mother never to forsake you, always to regard you as my own son. Frank! have I fulfilled that promise? Answer me, Frank!"

"My dearest and best mother!" murmured the young man with emotion, as he pressed the venerable hands that had held his own.

"May I speak to you, Frank, very freely—as if you were indeed my own son? Nay, as if you were my daughter?"

"Speak on, mother! do not spare me! I am not irritable! Believe me, I am not! Speak on, mother! I shall not get angry, or even impatient! I have no dignity to support. Ay, mother, begin, and the heavier you lay it on, the better you will do your duty!"

"Lay what on, dear Frank? I am not going to reproach you! Shall a physician foolishly reproach a patient for whom he should only prescribe? You are sick, Frank, and I wish to cure you—that is all. Frank, I know your disease. I have had a slight personal experience in it."

"You, mother?" exclaimed the young man, with a recoil of something approaching to horror and disgust.

"Yes, Frank, I! And I know it all—its symptoms and its cure. Listen, Frank! When I was nursing my last baby, your wife, Lydia, partly from having nursed her too long and partly from grief at the loss of her father, who died, as you know, when she was but two years old, I fell into a very feeble state. My chest was very much debilitated. The doctor told me to drink port wine every day, just before dinner. Well, I got the port wine, Frank, and it was such a cordial to my weak stomach as soon as I swallowed it, it diffused such delightful warmth and strength through my chilled and sinking frame—it exhilarated my depressed spirits so much, that I grew to wait for the hour of taking the agreeable medicine with impatience. Still, for awhile, I had the self-control to refrain from anticipating that hour, or taking an over-dose when it came. But at last, Frank, I seemed to need it more and more the longer I continued its use. The seeming good effect of the wine was only momentary, while its evil effect were permanent and increasing, stimulating for awhile, and then inducing greater debility, and consequently a seemingly greater need—certainly a greater desire. Frank, it became a disease—I could not see it then—I was beguiled on and on, growing weaker, more feverish, still believing it to be the natural progress of pulmonary consumption—still fancying the wine a positive and growing necessity. At last, Frank, one day, when very weak, and very thirsty, I took more than I in-

tended to take; it got into my head, made me drowsy; I lay down on the sofa, and fell into a stupid sleep. It was two o'clock, or about that, when I lay down; it was after midnight that I awoke, or some loud noise in the street awoke me. I rose up, but could not stand up—I was dizzy, sick, but sane. I sank down—closed my eyes. I knew then—oh, God! Frank, with what utter humiliation, with what anguish I knew that I had been—drunk. Frank, I had enjoyed, however unworthily, the reputation of a good Christian—an industrious, benevolent, self-denying woman—a devoted wife and mother; and, Frank, I had been beguiled into drunkenness—involuntarily, unconsciously! Frank, at that moment of closing my bodily eyes, the eyes of my spirit were opened, and I saw, as though it had been revealed by a sudden flash of lightning, the fearful descent down which I was hastening. I, the carefully brought-up daughter of pious parents—I, the mother of young children, who loved and venerated me—who gathered around my knee, morning and evening, to offer up their pure prayers and praises to God—I, their sole dependence, whose failure would make them paupers! Oh, Frank, my spirit was wounded to the quick! Frank, I have, in the course of my life, three times suffered the very extremity of bodily pain—pain that at its acme resulted in insensibility, and so had a merciful limit; but I had now to experience, most bitterly, how much more intense, how much more insufferable than physical agony was mental anguish—how much more scorching, scathing, than fire and flames to the flesh and blood, were re-

morse and shame to the soul! It was so sudden! so overwhelming, this rending aside the veil that revealed me to myself! I do not know how long I lay there in that awful state, or how it was that I managed to get up at last and go into the next room to look after the children. I found a little night taper still burning—Ellen and little Lydia were undressed and comfortably in bed, through the care of their sister Mary, then nearly thirteen years of age; but Mary was sitting on the foot of their little trundle-bed, with her elbows resting on her knees, and her head fallen upon her hands in an attitude of grief and despair I have never seen paralleled in a child. She looked up as I entered. Oh, Frank! if another pang were needed to consummate my suffering, it was inflicted then, when I saw that Mary, my daughter, understood it all. All? No, not all; she saw the sin, the shame, but not the hidden causes that would have palliated it. Not one word bearing upon the subject was spoken by either. 'Go to rest, Mary,' said I, as I undressed myself and bathed my head and face. She obeyed me, and we were both soon in bed. I arose the next morning, and, stealing quietly—for I did not wish by any open and decided act, to impress upon the memory of Mary a fact that I wished her to forget—I took the bottle of wine under my shawl, went in the yard and turned it out, and from that time until the night of your wedding, when Bohrer brought it in, there has been no alcohol in any shape in our house. Do you think my victory, then, was the complete overthrow of my enemy? Far from it, Frank. It was but

the commencement of a warfare that for awhile seemed to increase in strength day by day. That day the craving of this diseased appetite was worse than the pangs of hunger. I was nearly fainting from the withdrawal of the accustomed stimulant—but I persevered. The next day it was worse, and the suffering continued to increase —you see, I disguise nothing. Toward the last the failure of my whole nervous system, the prostration, and the intense craving for the stimulant that would have temporarily strengthened and exhilarated me was worse, I think, than the pangs of famine, but I knew that complete victory over my fascinating foe, or a fate worse than death, awaited me and my children; and I resolved, with God's help, to conquer. Frank! the second week my sufferings began to abate—the third week they were over —the fourth week consummated the victory. I did not feel the slightest desire for the stimulant. Remember, Frank, I had been but once in ignorance beguiled into excess, yet that one error, and the remorse that followed fast upon it, has given me to understand and deeply pity that powerful disease of morbid appetite to which so many are subjected. I know that many, during temporary fits of bodily debility, particularly when suffering from debility of the stomach, resort to alcohol for its warming and exhilarating effects, little knowing that this temporary strength subsides in greater weakness—little knowing the whirlpool of temptation into which they have entered. The only way is to stop short at once—bear all

the short suffering that follows that heroism—persevere, and you must conquer."

Frank had listened with deep interest to the old lady's story; he had recognized, in her case, the pathology of his own; when she had concluded, he raised her hand respectfully to his lips, and said:

"I reverence you, mother! You are my salvation. I am not yet degraded, mother; nobody calls me a drunkard; I have been caught, perhaps, half a dozen times in the last year, but have made no public exposure of myself; and now I will break right off. And when I suffer a great temptation, I will come to you, and you shall encourage me, and help me to bear it—for you will understand it, and your comprehending sympathy will be a perfect support."

"That will save you and yours, my son—and now it is quite time to get ready for church. Do you attend divine service on the Sabbath, Frank?"

"Yes, mother."

"That is well; 'forsake not the assembling of yourselves together,'" said the old lady, rising to go upstairs and dress for church.

CHAPTER VII.

DIFFICULTIES AND CHANGES.

Sustained by the intelligent sympathy and encouragement of his "mother," as he fondly called her, Frank Miller heroically persevered in his total abstinence; and in the course of a few weeks had apparently gained the mastery over his diesased appetite; in a few more weeks that appetite had disappeared. About this time his child, a son, was born, and in the first fresh joys of young paternity he forgot both his propensity and his sufferings in conquering it. Never was a happier young husband and father than Frank Miller, when Lydia had recovered from her confinement and was able to take her place by the side of the nice kitchen fire, with the cradle near at hand. And when the spring opened, it was a standing amusement to that humble neighborhood to see Frank walk his baby out every morning, while Lydia and her mother were preparing breakfast. And after breakfast, to see his fond leave-taking of the little one, before he went out to his work. And to see the queer presents of horse-cakes, spinning tops, etc., that he would bring home every evening to the babe of three months old! Toward the summer, however, Frank's spirits flagged, he became grave, or only fitfully gay. When Lydia would tenderly inquire into the subject of his gloom—he would laugh merrily and reply, "Nonsense! I'm tired, that's all, child."

Mrs. Anderson saw that there was something more serious than bodily fatigue in his gravity. She refrained from inquiring for some time, because she expected that he would voluntarily make her his confidant, but at length seeing that this was not likely to happen, she took the opportunity one day while Lydia was gone to market, to ask Frank the cause of his sadness. The ice thus broken, the waters of confidence flowed freely. Frank at once and candidly informed her that he was burdened with debts and worried with duns, that he saw no way of discharging the debts or escaping the duns.

"Why, how is that, Frank?" inquired the old lady.

"Why, mother, to tell the truth, when I married I only had two hundred dollars. I paid half of it away for some lumber to build this house with, and I got the rest on credit. And that other hundred, mother, somehow or other slipped through my fingers. I was foolish and thoughtless; everything Lydia admired I bought for her, whether she expressed a wish for it or not. I had a vague idea of retrenching some time or other, and making up the extra outlay."

"The old self-deception upon which so many have ruined themselves and their families, Frank; it very seldom answers."

"It has not answered in my case, mother. I have not saved one cent of my wages."

"No—the habit of inconsiderate expenditure may be formed in a short time—and it is very difficult to con-

quer it, when you think you are going to retrench and make up—how much do you owe, Frank?"

"I owe Fairfield a hundred and seventy-five dollars for the carpenter's work upon this house. I owe Ingle a hundred dollars for the lumber, and Purdy thirty dollars balance for painting and glazing, that is all. I owe no small debts. I pay cash for my marketing, and settle my grocery and dry goods bill every month."

"Frank, you have gained one victory by self-denial—now begin another struggle—get this difficulty conquered, and you will be a free man in every sense of the word. Resolve to set aside one-third of your wages to pay off these debts and you will be clear in six months. You can do it by cutting off unnecessaries. Buy no more pinchbeck brooches and gilt combs for Lydia, no horse-cakes and spinning tops for the baby, no ugly caricature prints for the walls. Come, Frank, I will help you in this struggle also. You shall have the renting of my little rough-cast house for the year; it is but five dollars a month, but it will help you some."

"You are so disinterested, mother! but I could not think of taking a mean advantage of your generosity, besides it is almost your only support."

"My son, I can manage well without it for a year—when I cannot get along, I will let you know."

"You are so good!"

"Nonsense, dear Frank, I am good to my own," replied the old lady, in her peculiarly cheering and affectionate tone.

The system of retrenchment was commenced, and through Mrs. Anderson's rigid adherence to its provisions, and through her constant affectionate check upon Frank's irregularity, it was persevered in, and would have been successful, but for one dreadful calamity; that shocked from their minds all thoughts of pecuniary or selfish interest. Fairfield, while at work upon the roof of a three-story house, lost his footing, and fell to the ground. He was picked up and brought home lifeless. Mrs. Anderson went at once to her daughter, and remained to console her under her terrible affliction. Quite absorbed in her sympathy with Mary and her orphans, she ceased to remember the lesser troubles of Frank and Lydia. Indeed, they themselves forgot their little difficulties in the contemplation of their sister's great sorrow. All their little rules were broken through, and this in the course of a few weeks. Frank had lost, by carelessness, every inch of ground he had gained by retrenchment. Thus the summer passed away. Mrs. Anderson still remaining with Mary, and taking in plain sewing to help her along with the little family expenses, and now almost regretting that she made over to Frank all the proceeds of the rent of the little rough-cast house. Poor old mother! she would have given her very last cent, and exerted her very last strength in the service of her children —and she only lamented that her ability was not equal to the demands made upon it. As winter approached another cause of anxiety was added to the many that oppressed her. Frank Miller was thrown out of employment. There

was certainly no danger of immediate suffering from this, for Frank's credit with the grocers and hucksters, where he had always paid his debts punctually, was above par—still it was a very serious drawback where two or three large debts remained to be paid, and besides, there was no telling how long he might be forced to remain in idleness. To increase the embarrassment of the family, another child, a girl, was born to them, just thirteen months after the birth of their boy; and now that Mary had in some degree recovered from the first violent ravages of grief, Mrs. Anderson came once more to reside with and assist her youngest daughter. Truly she was a devoted mother! But the earthly trials of this faithful servant of God, and lover of her kind, were very near their conclusion. Lydia had scarcely risen from her second accouchement when she was called to take her place by the sick-bed of her mother. A bilious pleurisy had seized her. The disease in its progress defied all the efforts of the physician to arrest it, and upon the night of the tenth day her acute bodily sufferings ceased, and she sank into an easy and beautiful languor, subsiding into death. So quietly had her spirit passed, that but for a smile that flitted across her face—a beautiful smile! a young smile—an infantile smile, such as lights up the countenance of a babe awakening from a dream—a divine irradiation, that in passing from her features effaced every mark that years of grief and care had traced upon it, leaving upon the inanimate clay the tender placidity of sleeping childhood.

Her children mourned her death as only children can

mourn such a mother. From her peculiar temperament the grief of Lydia was most violent and ungovernable at first, but as a natural consequence soonest expended itself. She was the first to recover her cheerfulness. Time, religion, and occupation are the great cures for sorrow—the poignant anguish of the children at the death of their beloved mother, at length subsided into a tender memory, united to a loving Christian hope.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE FATAL GLASS OF BRANDY.

The spring opened with better prospects for the denizens of The Three Cottages. Mary Fairfield had got a run of custom in dressmaking—just enough to keep her comfortably employed, without driving her to ruin her health by late hours and close confinement. With her frugal habits and judicious management, she was doing well for her three boys, providing them with wholesome plain food and comfortable clothing, and sending them to public school.

Bohrer was making money and growing selfish, losing the good humor and *bonhommie* of his countenance and manners, and getting an expression of acute calculation, and contracting habits of reserve and silence. Ellen had once or twice endeavored to persuade him to abandon the sale of liquor, but without success. The obstinacy that had refused to yield to the sound reasoning and affectionate persuasion of Mrs. Anderson, could scarcely be expected to yield to the fitful pleadings of the weak Ellen. Yes, Ellen was weak, and infirm of purpose. We have seen her in the first year of her married life bearing honest but gentle testimony against the use of ardent spirits. We have seen her gradually abandon her post of mild remonstrance, and now we might occasionally see her taking her tumbler of toddy, after coming in from a cold or a

wet walk. But the family of Frank Miller suffered most severely from the death of Mrs. Anderson, in the loss of her wise counsels and vigilant guidance. As soon as the agitation occasioned by the household afflictions had in some degree subsided, Frank looked earnestly into his little affairs. After such deliberation as his unschooled and flighty mind was capable of maintaining, Frank Miller determined that he would get clear of the burden of debt, by the rigid economy advised by his mother-in-law. Frank Miller's sanguine and energetic temperament made him necessarily very industrious—he was a thoroughly hard worker. And now, had Frank possessed a sensible as well as an amiable wife in Lydia, his difficulties would have melted away before his decision. Alas! Lydia, with all her gentleness and tenderness, was weak and capricious. It was now two years since Frank had left off drinking. It was again New Year's Eve. New Year's Eve seemed a fatal day to Frank and Lydia Miller. Frank had been at work all day at his place of employment. Lydia had been at work all day at home, making economical and wholesome pies and cakes for the children. Lydia could not be parsimonious on New Year's Eve. It was near sundown when Lydia completed the baking and cleared away her pastry tables, etc., and set her kitchen in perfect order. It was a cozy, comfortable kitchen, that of Lydia Miller's—the floor covered with a dark-colored domestic carpet, the whole of it manufactured by her mother—the windows shaded with dark chintz curtains—the stove glowing hot, diffusing a delightful heat through the room

—the pleasant, homely smell of freshly-baked cakes and pies—the prattle of the little toddling two-year-old boy, the crowing of the babe in the cradle—and Lydia's pretty, petite form and light step as she tripped about the room —now setting out the table, laying the cloth, and placing the waiter cups and saucers upon it—now stopping to chirrup to the baby—now to answer the prattle of the boy. Alas! that one so pretty and so good should be so weak—so unreflecting! Lydia had finished setting her supper-table, adding a couple of pies and a plate of gingerbread to the common staple fare of bread and butter and cold meat, and had set her coffee to boil, and was now all ready to receive her darling, merry-hearted Frank —when, growing childishly impatient of his somewhat protracted stay, in order to kill the time and to do a sisterly kindness, she filled a little basket with gingerbread to take to her nephews, the little Bohrers, next door. Slipping the handle of the basket upon her wrist, and taking the babe in her arms, and calling the little boy to toddle after her, she went into the next cottage. The shop was already lighted up, and Bohrer, behind the counter, was waiting on a crowd of customers. Lydia passed in and through the shop quickly, drawing her little boy after her. Among others, her widowed sister, Mary Fairfield. It was evident that Ellen had got through supper early, that Bohrer might have time to wait upon the unusual number of customers that New Year's Eve would send to his shop. Reader!—Ellen looks very differently now upon this New Year's Eve than she did upon the New Year's

Eve of six years ago. Ellen's face and figure have lost that delicacy of form and complexion, and that intelligence and refinement of expression that once distinguished her—she has a coarse, sensual, and apathetic look as she sits there gossiping with her neighbors. Just as Lydia came tripping in with her childish and graceful bustle, and after smiling and nodding "Good-evening" around the circle, had placed her basket of cakes on the mantelpiece, and fluttered down upon a seat by the side of her sister Ellen, a voice was heard in the shop exclaiming above the hum of conversation:

"Brew some for the women, Bohrer! Come, let's brew some immediately and take it in."

And soon there was a tap at the little back parlor door, and to Ellen's cheerful "Come in," entered Bohrer, with a small hand-waiter, upon which stood six glasses of brandy punch. He took it up first to Lydia, and lifting a glass smilingly offered it to her. With childish glee Lydia seized it, raised it an instant to the light, her eyes flashing with mirth, gave the "Happy New Year," and placed it to her lips. Alas! for the self-indulgent spirit that could not deny itself. Alas! for the thoughfulness that could not profit by experience. Bohrer then took the waiter around in succession to all the women, until each was supplied with the New Year's glass of punch—all, except Mary Fairfield, who steadily declined it. I wish you to remember these facts, namely: that Lydia's taste for ardent spirits was hereditary—had been formed by her mother's immoderate use of alcohol during the period of her nurs-

ing, that Ellen's appetite for spirituous liquors had been contracted by the constant seeing, handling, smelling it, and by the example of her husband—that Mary Fairfield, the widow, having had neither the misfortune of hereditary taste, nor of constant temptation, was a total abstinence woman from unperverted nature, rather than from principle, for Mary Fairfield had had none of that bitter experience which inspires such horror of alcohol in its innocent victims—and this explains the reason why, while refusing to touch it herself, she abstained from all attempts to influence the other women of the company—and this shows the necessity, while for its own sake we keep the appetite of a child unperverted by the taste of alcohol, we should, for the sake of others, endeavor to form in him or her that missionary spirit of total abstinence which will influence those that are in danger, which will "seek and save those that are lost." Soon the exhilarating effects of the punch were felt, and exhibited in the increased gayety of the little company—from smiling softly and conversing quietly, they grew noisy, talked aloud, laughed out in peals of merriment—still this was not intoxication, only exhilaration, such exhilaration as may also sometimes be produced in fashionable drawing-rooms and saloons, by costly cordials, wines and liquors.

In the meantime, Frank Miller had returned from work, and entering his house, and passing on to the kitchen, found all things comfortably prepared for his reception, and sat down to wait for his wife, supposing her to be upstairs putting the children to bed, or somewhere

about the house. But when half-an-hour had passed and she had not returned, Frank rightly concluded that she had gone "into sister Ellen's," and he determined to follow her. He took the coffeepot off the stove when it was just going to boil over, and setting it where it would keep warm, he shut up the kitchen and went. He entered the back parlor of Bohrer's just as the company were in the height of their enjoyment. Lydia, seeing him come in, set down her glass, and springing with youthful eagerness to meet him, exclaimed in tones of affected complaint:

"There, I knew it! I never can stop in at a neighbor's house but what Frank must follow me. Isn't it too hard?" and drew him—both laughing—away to a seat by her side.

"Frank, take something to drink?" asked Bohrer, putting his head in at the door.

"No, no, thank you," said Frank, lifting his boy upon his knee to cover a certain embarrassment he felt in being the only one of the circle that refused. Bohrer, not hearing his reply, or not believing his sincerity, had withdrawn his head from the door for a moment, and soon entered the room with a glass of brandy and water on a waiter.

"I believe, Frank, this is your drink, is it not?"

"Thank you, Bohrer, I would not choose anything, if you please."

"Nonsense, Frank! you are dull, it will wake you up—you are tired, it will restore your strength—you are cold, it will warm you."

"Thank you, Bohrer, but I must go home soon, and then our supper is ready, you know, and with the warm stove and supper I shall be recruited."

"Well, I haven't time to pay compliments. I must return to my customers, but I shall set this down by your side, and if you change your mind, why it is at hand, that's all;" and doing as he said, Bohrer left the room. By this time the attention of all the little circle was drawn to Frank. Frank felt that the "public sentiment" of this company was against him. Lydia took up the glass of brandy and water, and with sincere but deplorably mistaken affection pressed it upon his acceptance, saying:

"Take it, dear Frank! Oh, do take it—just take a little—a little won't hurt you—it was because you always took too much that it hurt you; but a little won't hurt you. Now do, Frank, for my sake—I cannot enjoy my punch a bit, unless you take something."

The fine aroma of the hot brandy was arising beneath his nose, entering his nostrils, stimulating the long-dormant but not extinct appetite—the sweet, tender, blooming face of his wife was smiling up into his eyes, pleading with him. Frank took the glass of brandy, and with a light laugh turned it off.

"After all, I have not broken the pledge, for I never happened to take that—I only took a resolution," laughed Frank, holding out his glass to Bohrer, who, having dispatched all his customers, had returned to the little parlor.

"Some more, Frank?"

"Yes, Bohrer, if you please—a little."

"That is a good fellow!" said Bohrer, as though Frank had conferred upon him the greatest favor in the world, and soon returned with the glass replenished.

"Do you know, Lydia," said Frank, when, after getting through his second drink, he became confidential upon the subject of his neighbors' faults, "do you know that I am afraid that poor Bohrer is on the road to ruin?"

"How so, Frank?"

"He is on the road to ruin!" replied Frank, with a mysterious air.

"Dear Frank, how you scare one! What is the matter with him?"

"He drinks too much," said Frank, with the oracular of incipient intoxication. "Don't you see how bloated he is getting? Don't you see how red his nose is?"

"Why, I never thought about that—but so it is indeed."

"Certainly, and his breath is like the bung of a whisky-cask."

"Yes, it is so always—but I never thought of it before—he ought not to drink too much, he ought to be temperate."

At that time how little Lydia understood what she was talking about! Frank Miller's judgment of Bohrer was perfectly correct. He was one of those plethoric subjects who could go on for a long time imbibing and absorbing liquor until his very blood was "liquid fire," and even perish by spontaneous combustion, without ever becoming dead drunk, or who after a long course of such life might suddenly fall into habits of beastly intoxication.

And Frank Miller! his sight that was now so clear to discern the danger of his brother, soon became so blind to his own! Alas for the self-indulgence, the thoughfulness, the mistaken tenderness of the youthful wife! Alas! for the weakness and instability of the young husband! Alas, for the fatal glass of brandy!

CHAPTER IX.

THE LITTLE ROUGH-CAST HOUSE.

The reader knows that a relapse is more dangerous, more rapid, and more frequently fatal in its consequence, than a first attack of disease. As every resistance of temptation augments the moral force, so every yielding to it weakens the power of resistance in the tempted. It were a painful and ungracious task to trace, step by step, the downward course of poor Frank Miller—how soon after breaking his good resolution by drinking that one glass of brandy, he grew to drinking occasionally, then frequently, then habitually, then immoderately—until his work was abandoned, his family neglected, and at last, in the course of twelve months, himself a confirmed drunkard! Too often in real life, and in fiction, has this disgusting pageantry, this sickening procession of self-indulgence, intemperance, idleness, poverty, sickness, suffering, degradation—the funeral train of domestic happiness, passed before the reader's tortured eyes. Let me spare myself the pain of telling it, you the pain of hearing it.

It would cost us less suffering from sympathy, but far more disgust to trace the fall of Bohrer, whose fate seemed only a just retribution for his sins. He it was, who, when "The Three Cottages" were each the beautiful abode of industry—economy, and neatness—of love,

peace, religion—were all united in the bonds of family affection—he it was, who, for the sake of making more money, brought the foe that should ruin the families, the firebrand that should ignite and lay waste their homes.

It is sufficient to say that at the end of three years two of "The Three Cottages" had changed owners. Bohrer still remaining as a tenant in the house he had been compelled to sell—and now habitually intoxicated. Ellen carrying on the small shop, that still decreased in stock, and that failed to supply enough to support their family, as well as she could. Once their furniture was taken for rent, and nothing remained in their once comfortable cottage except two beds, the three chairs, and the cooking utensils, that the law could not touch. Still Ellen, upon whom the sole care of the family had fallen, clung to the small shop-stand as to her last hope of support. Now that she was the sole dependence of her family, her strong maternal love came to her aid, and enabled her to throw off entirely the false appetite for alcoholic stimulus, that with her had never yet approached intemperance, for Ellen was of that sound health and of that lymphatic temperament that might go on a long time in the use of alcohol before falling into that excess to which other organizations are more liable.

About this time the war with Mexico broke out, and Bohrer was one of the first that volunteered in the service. Inured as Ellen had lately become to suffering, she could not see her husband depart upon a distant, a dangerous, and unholy service, without bitter tears and earnest re-

monstrances. Even with her phlegmatic nature there was a passionate vehemence, an impetuosity in her manner, as, after seeing him embark with the troops, she returned to her shop, seized and threw away all the liquor that the stubborn will of Bohrer had persisted in keeping in the shop. There was almost madness in the vengeance and the energy with which she destroyed every tumbler, wine-glass, and decanter about the shop. Then, with the energy of one who wishes to lose regret and the consciousness of deep mental sorrow in physical weariness, Ellen went to work and cleared her shop and house of every vestige of the enemy. In the course of a few days Ellen had restored something like its old order, if not its old comfort, to her home—sooth to say the cottage was all cleaner, quieter, and more cheerful, for the absence of the master. Ellen's neighbors did not scruple to say among themselves, "She does a great deal better without the worthless fellow than with him." But they did not know half the difficulties that still surrounded Ellen Bohrer. How many small debts she owed in every direction. How far in arrearage for rent she was. How very small the proceeds of her little shop were. Ellen unfortunately had no skill in needlework, and it requires a woman of a great deal of skill as well as of energy and perseverance to push herself into a circle of customers where there is such great competition. And Ellen, with many amiable traits of character, had none of these sterner qualities. So with her best efforts, poor Ellen Bohrer still slid down and down into deeper poverty.

Affairs had gone still worse with Frank Miller and his family. He also, as I said, had been compelled to sell his house to pay his debts, and to get money to buy bread and—liquor. In the meantime, every year had brought them a new child, an alternate boy and girl, until now Lydia was the mother of four children—Harry, Lizzie, Tommy, and Milly the baby. Frank was almost always intoxicated, or just recovering from it. It is horrible to contemplate this in the generous, cheerful, noble-hearted Frank. Let us turn from the picture, and let me tell you one thing that was beautiful even in this picture of ruin. Frank was never unkind to his wife or children. With all the wrong his degrading habits inflicted upon them, he loved them still, he loved them with more tenderness, the tenderness of remorse, of pity—as he witnessed their privations. Frank seemed the victim of an inevitable disease rather than of a degrading vice. Alas! that he could not shake off the spell that enchained him: alas! that he could not awake from the apathy that bound him, the self-indulgence that enslaved him! There was nothing on earth so eloquent as the penitence, the lamentations of this once noble but now fallen nature. Forget himself even in intoxication and abuse Lydia! or ill-treat his children! He who was drunk one-half the time, and penitent the other half, would have died sooner than have spoken, or looked unkindly at the wife and family his conduct was nevertheless reducing to pauperage. And Lydia, much as she suffered, she never reproached him. It is doubtful whether she had a right to do so. The right to do so, however, is

seldom taken into consideration by those who indulge in reproaches. But if Lydia was too gentle to reproach him, she was also too weak to reclaim him. Lydia could only weep when her children were hungry or cold, and there was no money to buy wood or food. Their rent also was far in arrears—their household furniture had, in the course of the last three years, gradually disappeared. Every article of value about the house had, in succession, been sold to purchase necessaries. All the nice parlor furniture was gone—all the pure white chamber furniture, the gift of her dead mother, had been disposed of—everything not positively necessary to their health, had vanished, except the home-made carpet on the kitchen floor. It was the work of her mother's hands, and Lydia could not part with it. Thus the autumn of 1846 found them. It was one day in November, that Frank had sauntered down to the Navy Yard with his hands lazily stuck into his pockets, and his hat crushed over one eye, with that undeniable look of worthlessness which habitual intoxication gives—with a vague idea of procuring work somehow, or somewhere. Frank's appearance was so much against him as to make it probable that even where workmen were in demand, his services would be rejected. Frank, of course, was unsuccessful— and upon the fact of his disappointment, he went to the nearest tavern and drank to inebriation. It was in the swaggering stage of his drunkenness that he was met by a recruiting sergeant, and under the influence of intoxication that he volunteered to go to Mexico. Not to lose his new recruit, the

sergeant took him at once to the Marine Garrison, where the company in which he had enlisted, were quartered.

That night poor Lydia, for the first time in her married life, was left all night alone, with her children. She sat up, awaiting Frank's return, until long after twelve o'clock, then slowly and sadly undressing herself, she lay down, but could not sleep, but lay there wondering, fearing, and counting the dark and heavy hours as they slowly, slowly brought on the dawn. She arose early, dressed herself and her poor children, set her poor house in order, and got her miserable breakfast of weak coffee, without milk, and corn bread ready. She determined, immediately after breakfast, to take her four children in to her sister Mary's, leave them there, and go in search of Frank, among his usual haunts. But she scarcely had time to finish her breakfast, and clear away the table, when she was interrupted by a rap at the door.

"Come in," said Lydia, supposing it to be one of her sisters or one of their children, who were always running in and out. But a young man, a friend of her husband, obeyed her summons and entered the kitchen. He looked gravely as he came in. By a sudden presentiment Lydia felt that evil tidings were coming.

"Sit down," she said, in a sinking voice, as she herself dropped into a chair. The young man took a seat, set his hat down by his side, and said in a hesitating tone:

"I have a message for you, Mrs. Miller."

"Well?"

"A message from your husband."

"Well?" reiterated Lydia, turning pale.

"He—he has enlisted."

"Oh! my God," exclaimed the unhappy wife, clasping her hands firmly together, and gazing vacantly into the face of her informant.

"His company go this afternoon in the cars, and he wishes you to meet him at the car office with the children, that he may take leave of you and them."

The young man spoke rapidly, thickly. A slight, half-suppressed scream burst from Lydia's lips—she arose, sank down again, again attempted to leave her chair, and fainting, fell forward upon her face.

The young man hastened to raise her. The children, startled from their play in the corner, ran to their mother, and seeing her apparently dead, set up a lamentable wail around her. The young man laid Lydia upon an old lounge, and hurried out into the next house to summon her sister Ellen. He explained the cause of Lydia's sudden illness in a few hasty words, and soon Ellen and Mary hastened to her aid. They found Lydia already recovering from the swoon in which her weak nerves and habitual want of self-command had permitted this ill news to throw her.

"Oh, Mary!" she said, as her sisters entered, "you are strong and you are wise. Oh, Mary, tell me what I am to do—what can I do?"

"Cannot Frank get leave of absence for a few hours to come and see her?" inquired Mary of the young man.

"No, ma'am, by no means; the troops are to leave the

city in this evening's train of cars, and the strictest watch is ever kept for fear of desertions from the ranks. The only way in which Mrs. Miller can see her husband is to go to the car office and wait till the troops arrive there."

Here Lydia's sobs broke out again, and her children crowded around her, her eldest boy, Harry, throwing his arms around her neck, and hugging her tightly, roared out for sympathy.

"Is there no possible way of procuring his discharge?" again asked Mary of the youth.

"You might try the Secretary to-day, ma'am; though I candidly tell you that the chance of getting him off is a poor one."

"Oh, Mary, try, Mary; dear Mary, try!" sobbed and pleaded Lydia.

"I will go—I will go at once," said Mary. "Keep up your heart, my dear Lydia, something may yet be done," and she hurried home to prepare for her affectionate mission.

To give the reader a sample of the manner in which poor women were treated, perhaps necessarily so treated, I will very briefly relate the interview of Mary Fairfield with the dignitaries of the Government. Arrived at the War Department, she went up the great stone stairs, and timidly entered the great marble-paved hall, flanked with mahogany doors leading into their various rooms, and labeled above in gold letters: "Office of the Adjutant-General," "Office of the Secretary of War," etc., and terminating in a great stone staircase, with iron balustrades

leading up into the second story. Mary felt a little awed by her loneliness in the great reverberating halls, and a little terrified at the idea of an interview with the great men of the place; her heart beat thickly. She had scarcely entered, however, before she was met by a messenger, who abruptly asked her:

"Whom do you want to see?"

"His honor, the Secretary of War, if you please," answered she.

"Oh! your husband is in Mexico, isn't he?"

"No, sir."

"Well, then, your father, or your brother, or your son is?"

"No, sir, none of my kin are in Mexico," replied Mary, whose modest deportment and simple widow's dress was beginning to win upon the case-hardened official.

"Very well; the Secretary has not come in yet; but you can see the chief clerk, and the reason of my stopping you was that not a day passes, but what some wife comes here to plead for her husband's discharge—or some widow to weep for her son's dismissal from service; and, in short, the Secretary has been so worried by such applications, that orders have been issued to stop all such petitioners at the door."

"Still, I think that all such petitioners should at least have a hearing, even if their petitions are not granted—for there is no telling what cruelty and injustice may be inflicted by refusing to receive the appeal of such an applicant."

"It can't be done, ma'am. You see, young men, and for that matter old men, filled with what they call patriotic ardor—a thirst for military glory—enlist in a hurry and go to Mexico, where the enthusiasm is taken out of them by cowhide boots, leather stocks, short rations, long marches, and drillings. They want to come home, write and work upon the sympathies of the women folks, who come up here and worry the Secretary—that's the reason I stopped you, you know. I thought you had somebody in Mexico."

Mary did not feel called upon to explain as she followed the messenger to a door, which he opened, saying:

"The office of the chief clerk;" and, as she entered, closing the door behind her, he retired.

Mary dropped a respectful curtsy. A gentleman arose from his seat at a large writing table, and urbanely handed her a chair. Poor Mary tremblingly took the seat, she was so nervous, and this politeness embarrassed her as much as an opposite deportment could have done. She began in a hesitating tone and told the object of her visit. The gentleman attended with a kind and sympathizing expression of countenance. At the end of her recital he informed her that he himself could do nothing in the case, that the secretary was ill at his house; but that she might see General ——, who might be able to serve her in this affair. Then he directed her where to find the office of the adjutant-general, and as Mary arose to leave the room, he kindly opened the door and called a messenger to attend her. Greatly encouraged by this

kindness, Mary went into General ——'s room with strong hopes of success. In an ante-room she found a youth who told her that the general was out, but would be in in the course of a few moments, and opening a second door, showed her into an inner room. Mary sat down and had ample time to benefit by the comfortable coal fire, to admire the rich carpet and tables, the easy chairs, and the stacks of flags of various sizes and colors with which the room was adorned, before the door opened and a little old man with closely curling red hair and a half-developed or half-suppressed strut, one could not tell which, marched into the room with a "Well, what do you want?" sort of expression upon his countenance. Mary arose, curtsied, and resumed her silence. She had lost her presence of mind again; the appearance of this little man was so unpromising, she felt her task an almost hopeless one. The general had thrown himself into his official chair, wheeled it around upon a pivot, crossed his little legs, placed his open palms upon his limbs, and looked at Mary with an expression of inquiry that was intended to be arrogant, but was only impertinent. Mary begged pardon for intrusion, and again commenced her little tale. He arrested her narrative before she had gone on two minutes by exclaiming flippantly in his high, keen, sharp, rasping tone:

"Ah, I know it! I know all about it! You needn't tell me the rest! Heard the whole story twenty times—every week for the last year! 'Sole dependence of his widowed mother!' Know all about it! know all about it!"

"Excuse me, sir," interrupted Mary, her gentle spirit rising against this natural born morris-dancer, shuffled by chance into "a little brief authority." "Excuse me, sir, he has a young wife with four children, and his wife is as incapable of taking care of herself and family as is the babe upon her bosom."

"That is his business, not mine; he should have thought of that himself when he enlisted."

"But, sir, he was not master of himself when he enlisted; he was——"

Mary blushed, and became silent.

"Was what?" maliciously inquired the manikin.

"Under the influence of liquor," said Mary, in a low voice.

"Then the army—active military service—is the very place to cure him of the propensity," said the general, rising and holding open the door for his visitor's departure.

Mary followed this rather decided hint, and left the room.

It was with a heavy heart that she returned home, and conveyed to Lydia the news of her failure. Lydia had wept all day; she was now lying exhausted upon the old lounge, and Ellen was taking care of her house and children, and making vain efforts to soothe her distress. The entrance of Mary with her evil tidings brought on a new burst of sorrow, though Lydia persisted in saying dismally that she had expected nothing else. In the afternoon Lydia arose, made an effort, and dressed herself

and her children to go to the car office to take leave of the husband and father. Lydia was so weak from having wept all day—so thoroughly incapable of walking—that Mary Fairfield hired a hack, placed her and her children in it, and entering it also herself, accompanied her sister to the place of parting. They alighted from the hack at the car office, and remained watching for the advance of the troop. Several other women were there upon the same sad errand. Lydia stood trembling, supported upon the arm of her sister Mary. At last the music arose upon the air from afar, down toward the Capitol, and soon the blue coats, nodding plumes and flashing arms of the soldiers were seen coming up the avenue. Lydia made two or three springs, as though she would have run to meet the troop, and singled out Frank. But Mary held her fast. Arrived at the depot, the soldiers were permitted, under certain restrictions, to take leave of their assembled friends. Unmindful of the gathered crowd, at the first sight of him Lydia had sprung forward and thrown herself, sobbing convulsively, upon the bosom of her husband. Frank drew her away, behind the shelter of a stack of boxes, held her weeping to his heart, kissed her again and again, while his own tears fell fast upon her face; then, gently releasing himself from her feeble but frantic clasp, he called their children, raised them one by one in his arms, kissed his farewell upon their innocent lips, blessed them, prayed for them, wept over them, and, at the word of recall, thrusting his bounty money hastily into the hands of Lydia, strained her once more

to his bosom, and broke away to join his ranks, leaving his wife fainting in the arms of her sister. An hour from this Lydia was lying, half stunned with grief, upon her bed at home, and the troops in the cars were nearly half way to Baltimore.

It was a week before Lydia Miller, the once petted and spoiled child of both mother, sisters and husband, could exert herself to do anything for her family. Lydia, enervated by indulgence and self-indulgence, was by the first shock of this separation rendered totally unequal to the exigencies of her position. In the second week the two older sisters held a consultation as to what was to be done with and for this youngest—this child of the family. The sisters, as the reader knows, were poor—very poor. Mary Fairfield, the widow, the seamstress, the total abstinence woman, was the only one who had held on to her dowry, the cottage and lot. And in passing, let me say that this fact is worthy of remark, that while Lydia and Ellen had the help, or ought to have had the help of their husbands, with the superior wages that men's labor receives, they yet lost through intemperance the possession of their houses; while Mary, though losing her husband, and having nothing to depend upon but the scanty remuneration of her needlework, yet retained her house and all her acquired property, in fact. Mary, the hard-working widow, was almost wealthy in comparison with her two sisters who had husbands capable of making six times her wages. There was one little piece of property owned in common between the sisters.

This was their little old homestead, their native cot, their mother's little rough-cast house, that stood out in the field alone, with a small, weed-grown garden all around it. But this little house was so old, small and dilapidated, and so far out of the way, that it brought in now only three dollars a month, which, of course, divided, gave each sister only a dollar a month. As this little rough-cast house was now vacant, and as Lydia was already in arrears for rent, it was decided between the sisters that she and her family should be removed there, and that they should not require of her their own share of the rent. To give her this house rent-free was all that the sisters could now do for her, unless—yes, Mary said that she would try to obtain needlework for her, though Lydia's want of skill threatened to be a great obstacle to her success. When Mary and Ellen proposed this plan to Lydia, and advised her to remove before her little furniture was seized for rent, she gratefully acceded to it. In a few days Lydia was settled once more in the humble home of her happy infancy. Lydia had honestly paid five dollars out of her bounty money to her landlord, and with the other five (Frank had sold his liberty for only ten dollars) she bought shoes all around for the children, as it was now growing cold and frosty under foot. The winter was now setting in, and the greater wants produced by the cold weather and the harder work, and closer economy required in order to meet them, quite absorbed the two elder sisters, so that in the care of their children they were forced to leave Lydia very

much to her own guidance. That was a hard winter on the poor. By the early closing of the river, wood rose in price to one-third more than its usual value. Because of the war with Mexico, the famine in Ireland, the partial failure of our own grain crops, and other adverse circumstances, the price of breadstuffs were nearly doubled, flour arose to eight, nine, ten dollars a barrel, and this at a time when the support of large families was thrown upon feeble women with their limited fields of labor, and the miserable pittance of wages, by the absence of fathers, husbands and brothers in the Mexican War. I scarcely know how the three sisters contrived to exist through that dreadful winter. Mary and Ellen managed to do without the aid of public charity, but their best efforts failed in saving Lydia from that necessity. Mary had succeeded in procuring some needlework, but Lydia's deplorable want of skill, and slowness in acquiring it, was an almost insuperable obstacle to her success.

For weeks at a time, in the bitterest weather, Lydia would be without wood. The fence all around the little rough-cast house had to be pulled down and burnt to save herself and her babes from freezing. For whole days Lydia would be without food, and in such exigencies she would sometimes, when everything else failed, apply to the benevolent societies. Twice her crying necessities were relieved; upon the third application assistance was necessarily denied her. The society, through the unusual demand upon its resources, had involved itself in debt, and was obliged to retrench. The long and weary win-

ter, with its terrible sufferings, was at length over. It had passed without bringing to the desolate wife any tidings of her husband. Spring opened, and, relieved from the pressure of the severest want of the season—the want of fuel—the sisters began to look up more cheerfully. Their faces seemed less pale, haggard and hungry. Lydia had now acquired some knowledge of cutting and fitting children's nice clothes, and the spring had brought its increased run of business. The three sisters, among them, took one copy of *The Star*. It was a penny paper, and they took it for the sake of seeing the army news. It was usually carried to Mary, who read it, and then sent it around to her sisters. One day, just as Lydia was entering Mary's front gate, the newsboy passed, and threw in the paper. Lydia caught it up and hurried into the house with it, greeted her sister hastily, and sat down to look over the paper. She turned first to the columns usually devoted to army news, and read with a curdling cheek and freezing heart, in great capital letters, "Glorious News from Mexico. Great Battle Fought. American Troops Victorious." Glancing breathlessly down the column, suddenly with a wild shriek she leaped from her seat into the air and fell forward upon her face, as though an arrow had pierced her heart. The name of Francis Miller was among the killed. For days the life of Lydia hung upon the weakest thread. She would recover from insensibility only to fall into convulsions at the first dawn of consciousness and memory, and this continued until her

strength utterly failed under it, and it was feared that she was sinking into death. At last youth and nature conquered, and she began slowly to recover. She arose from her bed of illness at first only the ghost of her former self—so emaciated, so wan, so wild-looking through her eyes. But soon that singular strength, that latent strength that is the growth of trial and suffering, began to develop itself in Lydia. She looked life steadily and firmly in the face, and began to gather up the fragments that remained of her broken happiness, that nothing might be wasted. Through all that summer, as her strength returned Lydia devoted herself to the care of her children with a mother's perfect love, and while the summer and fall lasted she managed by perseverance, if not by skill in work, to supply their necessities. With the approach of winter, however, troubles thickened around her. Work became very scarce, and wages very low, nor was it possible, in every instance, to obtain from her employers even the scanty pay for which she had contended. It was thus that December, 184—, found her.

CHAPTER X.

NEW YEAR'S EVE.

It was once more New Year's Eve. Lydia was once more preparing for the New Year. But, oh! under what different circumstances to those in which we have before seen her making ready for the festival.

Take a look at her home, herself and her children now. It is early, very early in the morning. The snowstorm has been driving against the windows all night long. Lydia has not slept a wink. How could she sleep, with the children continually waking up and crying with the cold? How could she sleep, with the knowledge that there was no wood—no, not one log left in the house to make a fire with in the morning; that there was no food except a very little handful of meal in the bottom of the barrel? Lydia arose as soon as it was light, for she had a job of work to do that was strictly required to be finished against New Year's Day. It was a dress for a little girl whose parents lived on the avenue, and who, in the press of work accumulating in the Christmas holidays, had employed Lydia to make it. By rising early she might finish the job by evening, and so please her employer and get the money to buy a few necessities for the New Year. She had set up at work late on the preceding evening, until the candle borrowed from her sister Mary had burnt out in the socket and left her in darkness;

still there was a day's work to do yet, as the dress was a merino one, to be trimmed elaborately with braid. As soon as it was light enough to see to work, Lydia arose, shuddering at the biting cold, and dressed herself with numb hands. She covered the children up warm, telling them to lie close. Then she descended the stairs into the cold, dark, fireless kitchen. First she tried to open the kitchen door, to see how deep the snow might be, and if there was any possibility of getting over to Mary's to borrow a log of wood. But Lydia had to make many ineffectual efforts before she could pull open the frost-bound door, and then an avalanche of drifted snow that had been piled up against it fell in upon her and a gust of falling sleet and snow blew into her face. It was dreadful to look out over those white fields of drifted snow, in which the fences had disappeared, and in which even the small houses were half sunk. It was totally impossible to get over to the Three Cottages that morning through the terrible snowstorm. With freezing hands, and by hard labor, Lydia succeeded in shoveling out the snow and closing the door. Then she opened the ice-bound window shutters, and let the light in upon the desolate kitchen. What a scene it was! The favorite carpet—"mother's home-made carpet"—had vanished before the food and fuel necessities of the impoverished family. The floor was bare, and the planks warped apart with age let a tiny draught up through them. The plastering was broken in many places, and the window-sashes and panes were loose, so that the wind rushed in at

every quarter, making the room very cold, even when there was a fire in the fireplace, and now there was none, and no probability of there being one. A few old, rickety chairs, a pine table, and a cupboard, with a few old cups and saucers of delfware, were all the furniture of the desolate kitchen. As the cold, gray light of the stormy morning fell in upon the cold hearth, Lydia looked up in despair. Her limbs were becoming powerless from intense cold; her feet were like lifeless clods; her hands were stiff and useless! What was to be done? Were her children indeed to starve and freeze before her? She rubbed her hands together vigorously to restore their suspended circulation; she went to the meal barrel, and, turning it up, emptied the handful of meal into a bowl. But how to cook it without fire? Suddenly a bright thought struck her. Taking an axe from the corner under the stairs, she rolled the barrel on to the hearth and commenced knocking it to pieces. It was a light stave barrel, so thaf by the exertion of all her little strength she managed to split it up, and, taking a box of matches from the mantel-piece, she soon had a blazing fire; then, going to the foot of the stairs, she called out, cheerily:

"You may get up, children, now—there is a fire now;" and setting her little griddle to heat, she thawed the ice from the stone pitcher and began to mix her corncake. It was baked by the time the children came downstairs. And after she had placed the corncake upon the pine table, and after the children had gathered around it, she

asked a blessing in a cheerful voice, and broke the bread among them. A fire and a meal had been effected, and that was enough to restore for the hour the peace of one now inured to hardship. Little clearing away did this humble meal require. It was soon done; and, setting down her children, girls and boys, to cut and sew carpet rags, she took up her sewing and applied herself vigorously to it, stopping now and then to clap her hands to restore their congealing circulation, or to keep up the little fire by the occasional addition of a stave.

"Never mind, children," she would say, gayly; "we shall have a good fire to-night, and some bread-loaf for supper. Mother has only got to finish and carry home this work, and she will get some money, and buy some wood and some flour and molasses, and she will see if she can't make her children some cake for New Year's."

"And, mother, won't you get my shoes home from Mr. Tucker's?" asked little Harry, whose little shoes had been at a cobbler's to be mended for two weeks, and had remained there because there was no money to pay for them.

"Yes, Harry, dear; mother will do that, too."

All day long she stitched and stitched. The children became hungry again, and the fire was almost out. They became very cold. Hunger and cold react upon each other, each augmenting the other. About noon the barrel that had supplied the morning's fuel, stintingly as it had been used, was quite exhausted, and only a few embers remained. Lydia had three old chairs; one of them must be sacrificed; a little fire must be had, or the children

must perish. She arose and broke up the chair—no hard matter; it was rather rickety—and placed it on the fire. The children crowded around the little blaze, Milly, the baby, bringing her pet pigeon, whose feet were also crisped up with cold, and the mother resumed her needle. All day the mother and children had watched the sky, waiting for, hoping for, the cessation of the snowstorm with an anxiety only to be realized by the very poor and suffering. At length, a little after noon, the storm subsided, and the sun shone out in splendor.

"See, children! it has cleared off beautifully!" exclaimed Lydia, by way of calling their attention to the brilliant flashing of the sun upon the snow without, as she plied her needle with renewed zest and cheerfulness; but soon as the afternoon waned her good spirits flagged—a weariness, a chilliness, an inclination to yawn, a headache, crept upon her. These slight chills, followed by hectic fevers, the effects of constant anxiety, work, exposure, and slow starvation, she had felt at irregular periods before, but always in the morning or evening. But now, as she sat there, the symptoms increased; an insuperable weariness, a deathlike chill, shiverings, glows, mortal sickness seized her. Still, she crept nearer the fire, and worked harder, faster, to complete her task; it must be finished, or the children must famish with cold and hunger. They had eaten nothing since morning; the fire was dying out a second time, and now the second chair was split up and put upon the decaying embers. It was near sunset when

the dress was finished. With her cheeks burning with high fever, with her very throat and lips scorched with the flame of her breath, with a splitting headache, Lydia tottered to her feet, smoothed out the dress, and, folding it neatly, pinned it up in the carefully preserved paper in which it had been brought home. Then sinking quivering and exhausted in her chair again, she called two of her children to get ready and carry it home.

"Let me take it, mother," said Harry, the eldest boy.

"No, my dear, you have no shoes; Lizzy's and Tommy's shoes are good—let them go."

Then she sent Harry upstairs, for two pair of his own well-darned stockings, and calling the two little ones, she drew the socks over their shoes to keep them from filling with snow; and then, wrapping them up in their little linsey cloaks, and tying on Tommy's little catskin cap and Lizzy's brown stuff hood, she gave Lizzy the bundle and started them. Then, returning, she dropped upon the old lounge, utterly prostrated. Harry was at her side again in an instant.

"Mother, you are sick; dear mother, ain't you very sick?"

"Only a little, darling; I have had a chill, and now have a fever, that is all. Look at your little sister, Harry —lift her up and put her in the cradle," said the mother, straining her eyes anxiously to a corner of the room where the baby had cried itself to sleep for hunger, and lay coiled up with its still fat arm doubled up under its dimpled cheek, and the pet pigeon sheltered to its

bosom. "Lift her up, Harry, and lay her in the cradle; cover her up warm, Harry."

The little boy raised his sister with difficulty. She had waked, sighed, but fell asleep again as he placed her on her little bed and tucked her up. The pet pigeon cooed uneasily, hopped up on the edge of the cradle, plumed itself, and, fluttering down upon the pillow, nestled lovingly against the infant's cheek.

"Mother, can I do nothing for you?" asked the child, coming back to his mother's side. "Can't I cover you up? Can't I hold your head?"

"Yes, Harry, darling; you can get a quilt from upstairs and lay over my feet; and close the window blind to keep out this light—it makes mother worse, my dear."

Harry did all that was required of him, and then sat down in the dark, cold room, with his infant sister sleeping in the cradle, and his suffering mother lying upon the lounge. He sat down by her side with a saucer of cold water, in which he continually wet his little hand to cool her head.

"Never mind, dear Harry," said she, in a low, weak voice; "be patient, dear Harry—mother's fever will go off by and by, and brother and sister will return with the money and with your shoes, and you shall go out and buy some wood and groceries. You shall have a good fire and a good supper yet."

An hour passed. The high fever was going off in the perspiration that concludes an attack of ague and fever, and she was waiting for this also to pass off, when the

baby awoke and began to cry for food. The mother got up at once and went to her child, took her in her arms, and walked the floor with her, trying to soothe her with caresses, with soft words and gentle smiles, and promises that she should have something to eat when her sister and brother came home.

"But me hundry—me so hundry!" wailed the child, incessantly; "me no b'ead so lon' time, mammy! Div Milly b'ead, mammy!" tearfully coaxed the infant, clinging around her mother's neck, unable to understand why its mother could not satisfy its wants. But if the piteous complaints of her babe were torture to hear and to bear, not the less agonizing was the sight of her poor, patient boy, with his broad, fair brow, large, hollow eyes, and sharp chin, sitting on a little old trunk, with his thin hands locked together. He was her first born, and if she did not love him best, at least they understood each other best; he was in her confidence, and now he comprehended the melancholy look with which she regarded him, and starting up, he ran to her, and embracing her, said:

"It is most time for them to be here, mother; and if you and the baby can stand it, I can, dear mother."

It was time, high time that the children had returned. It was getting dark, and their mother, though momentarily expecting them, was growing every moment more anxious. It was horrible—the approaching night, that freezing room, that fireless hearth, the starving but patient boy, the wailing infant, the growing darkness, the intense anxiety for the two little wanderers, the desola-

tion, the despair—oh! perhaps the death closing all around them!

"Oh! where can my children be? Oh, God! have mercy on me! They must have fire, they must have food, or die before me!" She set down the infant, and calling her son, said: "Harry, come and try to help me split up this table; it is the very last thing, except the baby's cradle, that will burn about the house." And the table soon shared the fate of the chairs; and as the cheerful blaze once more arose on the cold hearth the eye of the mother fell upon the children's pet pigeon. A bright thought like an animal instinct suddenly lighted up her face, and then a shadow fell upon her brow, and a tear dimmed her eye. "No, poor thing! I can't take your life—at least not yet, not quite yet. You have suffered hunger and cold with the children, and you love them and they love you," thought Lydia; and then, again raising the baby, who had exhausted itself by weeping and was now quiet, up in her arms, she went to the window to look out for her wandering children. No sign of them could she see, though she looked eagerly, far, far over the undulating drifts of snow that stretched on toward the city. She watched till the sky grew too dark for her to discern anything.

In the meantime, the two little children had toddled along leg-deep in the drifts of snow, but bearing it bravely, as children always bear such things, until they got to the pavement running around the Capitol. It was good walking there, and on the flagstones crossing to

Pennsylvania avenue, and down the avenue, and the children ran on until they got to the line of fancy stores, toy shops, etc., and there they would pause and gaze, not knowing how soon time would pass and night would be on them. They saw well-dressed children of their own age going into toy-shops with their mammas, or coming out with their hands or little baskets filled with dolls, tops, guns, drums—things that to these poor children looked so splendid and seemed so desirable—and further they would go on and stop and gaze with hungry eyes into the confectioners' shops, where the very smell of the freshly-baked cakes stimulated anew the appetites of the half-famishing children. They went on, and at last came to the by-streeet down which they had to turn to take the dress to the family to whom it belonged. It was a teacher's family; and when the children got to the door, and Lizzy pulled the bell, it was the teacher himself in his wadded dressing-gown, who opened the door. When he saw two little bits of children there—two tiny little human wrens, as they were—so late in the evening, through such a deep snow, he paused a moment in pitying amazement. Then he pulled them gently in out of the cold before he inquired:

"What do you want, little ones?"

"Please, sir, mother has sent home the work."

"Ah, yes! hem! Elly's dress, I suppose. Well, come in, little folks, and warm yourselves. Mrs. Anson is in the back parlor;" and, leading the way through a narrow passage to a sitting-room, where there was a warm stove

and a tea-table set, the teacher made the children sit down near the stove, and took the bundle from them and handed it to his wife, who had just entered. She opened and looked at it, seemed well pleased, and said, turning to her husband:

"Have you a dollar and three-quarters in change, Mr. Anson?"

"Is that the price she asked for making this dress?" inquired the schoolmaster.

"Yes. It is heavily braided, you see; it must have taken her four or five days to make it."

"Yes, it did," chimed in both the children here.

The teacher stopped and looked at them. He saw their poverty, their hunger, their enjoyment of the stove, their eager but covert glances at the bread on the table.

"Is not supper nearly ready, wife?"

"Yes; Kitty is just going to bring it in;" and as she spoke, Kitty entered, and placed a pot of coffee and a tureen of oysters on the table.

"Well, then, let's sit down; come, little folks," he said to the children, "come up and get some supper. Kitty, put two plates here for these children."

The schoolmaster's own sons and daughters now came in and took their seats at the table, and Miss Elly, the youngest girl, kindly removed the wet cloaks of the poor children, and showed them where to sit. It did the hearts of the kind-hearted family good to see how the famished children enjoyed this feast, until little Lizzy suddenly stopped, and burst into tears.

"Why, what is the matter, little one? Don't cry. What are you crying for?"

"Because moth—moth—mother ain't got any!" sobbed the child.

"Well, never mind—mother shall have some. We will put some in a little tin bucket, and give you, to carry to mother. You are a good girl, to think of mother."

"I thought of her, too!" chimed in Tommy, with his mouth full; "only I can't cry like Lizzy, because I'm not a gal."

As soon as supper was over, the teacher's wife put up a little pint pail of oysters, and placed it in the hands of Lizzy, saying:

"You may take the oysters to your mother, and you may keep the pail;" and the teacher gave Lizzy a two-dollar bill, telling her to tell her mother, "Never mind the quarter."

And the children, now warmed, fed and comforted, set out upon their return. The schoolmaster and his wife knew nothing of this family—nothing at all of the extreme destitution into which they had fallen; nothing of the distance the children had to traverse, else you may be sure that they would have sent a servant to see them safely home, and a basket of provisions to further relieve their necessity. The children hurried along merrily enough until they came to the avenue again. Here they paused and sauntered—the gas-lights of the streets, the brilliantly illumined windows, the cheerful crowd, hurrying up and down the pavements, fascinated their atten-

tion; and when some crowd of boys, firing off squibs, would sing out, "Hurra for New Year's!" Tommy, poor, thoughtless child, would clap his hands and crow out in reply, "Hurra-a-a-a!" until the earnest little Lizzy, pressing his arm, reminded him that mother was waiting, and they hastened on. The children got on well all down the long avenue, and round the pavement of the Capitol, until they left them, with their bright lights, behind and struck out into the snow-clad fields beyond. Here it was dark, but for the starlight and the snow, and here the drifts of snow were very deep; and what was worse, the ground under it was very uneven, traversed with gullies and ridges, and the children plunged on through the drifts nearly up to their waists, sometimes above them, and sometimes almost lost among them. Presently, in climbing up a snow-covered ridge, poor Lizzy slipped and rolled over down the other side, drawing heaps of snow after her, until she was buried in the deep drift at the foot. With a scream of terror, Tommy run and slid down to her rescue, dug her out hastily with his hands, and pulling her up with all his little might, asked breathlessly:

"Are you hurt, Lizzy? Are you bumped? Is it bleeding anywhere?"

"No," sobbed the child, looking around her; "but—but I have lost the money and the oysters, and—and—oh! I have lost the sweet little pail!" she exclaimed, with a new burst of grief. "Oh! help me to look for the pail, brother."

The children began to grope about among the snow until their hands and feet were stiff with cold. Of course the money was lost beyond recovery; but at last they found the pail, and, weeping bitterly with cold and disappointment, they toiled on their laborious way through the snowdrifts toward their home. Arrived at the door, they saw by the flickering light on the windows that "mother" had some fire. Their hands too numb to double up for a rap, they pushed against the door, which was quickly flung open, and their mother received them both in her arms, exclaiming:

"Oh, children! where have you been? What kept you so long? I have been so uneasy about you!" and, without awaiting an answer, she drew them to the small fire, and began to pull off their wet shoes and stockings. Not until she had made them as comfortable as she could with her small fire, and not until they had told her of the schoolmaster's kindness to them, did she ask:

"Where is the money, children? And did you remember to call for your brother's shoes?"

"Oh, mother! we lost the money, and so we couldn't get the shoes!"

"Lost the money!" exclaimed the mother, in despair.

"Lost the money!" cried Harry, in dismay.

"Yes, lost the money! Indeed, we couldn't help it, mother! I carried it carefully in my hand, but I fell down in a snow-bank, and as I opened my hand to catch myself, I lost the money. You ain't mad with poor us, mother, are you?"

"Angry with you, Lizzy!" exclaimed the mother, in a tone of utter despair; "angry with you, poor child? No, it is not that!"

She now turned to look at the baby in the cradle. It had ceased its noisy complaints, and now was wailing with a piteously low moan, as though its strength was quite exhausted. She turned from that sight to look on Harry. His eyes, as he stood in the corner by the fire, were cavernous with famine. And then she went and caught the pet pigeon, which flew to her bosom. Harry's large, haggard eyes followed her suspiciously with their bright glare.

"What are you going to do with Pidggy, mother?" he asked.

"Kill it, my love—kill it!"

"Oh, mother! no! no! no!" exclaimed Lizzy and Tommy, in a breath.

"Children, you have supped—your brother and sister are starving."

"Oh, mother! not for me," pleaded Harry. "Spare poor Pidggy! See how she loves you, and tries to get in your bosom."

And now all the children except the famishing baby in the cradle crowded around their mother pleading for "Pidggy." Tears rolled down Lydia's cheeks as she turned away from them, and, pointing to the cradle, said:

"Your little sister complains no more—she is dying for food. Pidggy's life taken will save hers; go away—it will only be a moment. Pidggy will not suffer much."

And she gently pushed the children off, and went to a dark corner, whence she took a hatchet, and holding the head of Pidggy down upon the hearth, raised the hatchet. A startling rap at the door arrested her hand.

"Who is there?" inquired she, turning around. The knob was turned, the door opened, and a handsome, well-dressed man entered. A loud scream burst from Lydia's lips, and, dropping the living pigeon, she sprang to his bosom:

"Frank!"

"Lydia!"

"Good God! is this you? Am I dreaming, or has trouble driven me mad?"

"I, Lydia—it is I! Compose yourself, Lydia; compose yourself, dear Lydia," said our old acquaintance, Frank Miller; for, of course, it was he who had returned safe and sound, and was now soothing, caressing, and—yes, weeping over his wife. "Lydia, how are you? How are the children? Oh, God!" he exclaimed, bitterly, looking around; "you are so poor!"

"Oh, I am rich! I am rich!" replied Lydia. "You are restored—you are restored! The grave is not inexorable! It has restored you to my love!"

"What grave, dear Lydia? You are talking very wildly, love."

Need I tell the reader how quickly the scene was changed in that miserable home—how soon a hot fire blazed in the chimney, how soon a hot supper smoked on the table, how the children gathered around it, trans-

ported between the joy of seeing their father's return, their mother's joy, and the much-needed supper before them?

Need I tell that a mere mistake in the military report had occasioned Lydia's supposition of her widowhood? How the irregularity of the mails had prevented the rectification of the mistake? Need I tell you with what joy, as she and Frank, with the two youngest children on their laps, and the two eldest seated between them, were seated at the fire, Lydia heard that Frank and Bohrer had met in Mexico, had both reformed, had both taken the pledge two years before, and had kept it faithfully ever since—that Bohrer had returned with him to Washington, and was now at his own home with Ellen? The next day, New Year's Day, Mary Fairfield (from whom I got this whole story), who had the only comfortable home in the family, invited her two sisters and brothers-in-law to a family dinner at her home. And perhaps in all the rejoicing in the city of Washington there was none so heartfelt as theirs. The sale of their bounty land, and the savings from their wages, enabled Bohrer and Frank Miller to repurchase their homes at a considerable advance upon the price at which they had been sold. And now the Three Sisters, two of them under happier auspices than ever, are once more settled in the Three Cottages.

ANNIE GREY.

And a man's foes shall be those of his own household.—MATT. x. 36.

> If thou would'st, doctor, find out her disease,
> And change it to a round and pristine health,
> I would applaud thee to the very echo,
> That should applaud again.—SHAKESPEARE.
>
> Sick people commonly recover,
> If only neighbors give them over.—BUTLER.

It might not be considered polite "to talk to physicians of fevers," in stories, more than in drawing-rooms; yet, if I so offend, pardon me, for the sake of a good motive, as the lady said when she killed her friend by advising the wrong physic. Besides, I "hold these truths to be self-evident"—that it would be a wanton waste of my own leisure, and an impertinent trespass upon my readers' time, to obtrude upon their notice a pure fiction, without object or aim—such being the prerogative only of those monarchs of fancy and imagination who have divided among themselves the empire of romance and poetry. (The reader will please consider inserted here the names of his or her favorite novelists or poets.) Therefore, I shall only "deferentially solicit," as the office-seekers say, the company of my clement reader to a gossip about the

errors and foibles of our neighbors, faithfully promising to exaggerate and embellish no more than is customary with other retailers of scandal. And the first thing we will talk about, dear reader, will be neighbors' well-meant but oft-times injudicious and fatal prescriptions for the sick. And it is a matter far too serious to be lightly treated; therefore, attention! I have known many cases in which neighbors' prescriptions have retarded the convalescence of the sick; I have known several, in which they have rendered recovery impossible. The first illustration in point that occurs to me, is the case of a relative, a man in the prime of life, who was recovering from a severe attack of bilious pleurisy. He was so far convalescent as to require no farther aid from medicine or attention from a physician. He was able to sit up, but very weak. While in health, he had been a moderate drinker of wine and brandy. Now that he was suffering under the debility consequent upon a severe fit of illness, he fancied that he required his accustomed stimulant. A neighbor, tender-hearted to the extent of weakness, mixed and presented to him a glass of brandy toddy. From the moment in which he swallowed it, his fever arose, and he grew rapidly and alarmingly worse. The family physician was hastily summoned, and, upon his arrival at the bedside of his patient, he demanded to be informed what he had been taking. The conscience-stricken neighbor answered, in faltering tones, "Nothing in the world, doctor, but a little drop of brandy toddy, which you know could not possibly hurt him—could it?"

"He will be stiff enough in three days," was the literal reply of the blunt old physician.

And he was "stiff enough in three days," and to the end of her long life, the kind-hearted but ill-judging neighbor reproached herself with having "killed poor George G——."

Let me try to recall the circumstances of the next case.

Yes! I remember. There was poor B. He was a good youth—"one of the excellent of the earth"—his mother's heart—his father's right hand. While suffering under a slight indisposition, induced by a long pedestrian journey through the heat of an August sun, he was persuaded by a neighbor to try somebody's pills, an infallible remedy for diseases—hydrophobia and whooping cough, croup and corns, mania and measles, erysipelas and everything. He bought a box, poor boy! and took the pills; but the more pills he took, the worse he grew—and the worse he grew, the more pills he took—until the box was empty, and himself past cure. The pills, in his particular case, acted as a potent poison, and killed him in two days. His medical attendant (called in when he was dying) said it, and his parents knew it.

I wish that Congress would leave quarreling for a few minutes, and pass a little by-law, making it murder to kill with kindness, and felony to prescribe without a diploma. There would be some lives and medical reputations saved, perchance, though at the cost of depriving some worthy people of a favorite amusement.

It is rather hard that physicians not only have a down-

right, aboveboard, open enemy, in a disease, to encounter, but that in neighbors' prescriptions they have to contend with a secret foe, who works in the dark, whom they do not suspect, and cannot surprise—because, when the step of the doctor is heard upon the stairs, the bottle or the bowl is always thrust under the bed or into the cupboard. These neighbors, while entertaining the kindest intentions, and making the most plausible professions, contrive by their prescriptions to counteract the doctor's treatment, baffle his skill, and kill his patient—by giving a stimulant where he has ordered a sedative, an astringent when he has directed a cathartic, or an opiate if he has prescribed a febrifuge—and *vice versa*. And the physician comes and finds that a case, the successful treatment of which has cost him deep research, severe study, anxious thought, constant vigilance—a case in which not only his professional reputation is involved, but his social sympathy is enlisted (for the family physician, though a constant attendant at the bed of suffering, is not case-hardened; he feels the imploring glance of his patient, who seems to think life depends upon the doctor's skill; he sees the anxious looks of friends, who scarcely breathe while listening to his fiat)—a case which he has brought to a certain point of convalescence, suddenly wrested from his hands, and placed beyond his reach, not by the inveteracy of disease, not by the inefficiency of medicine, but by the officious intermeddling of some well-meaning but injudicious neighbor. In many such cases, the physician must be utterly at a loss to conjecture the cause of his patient's

unexpected change for the worse; for, more than half the time, neighbors and friends are unconscious of having caused the mischief, or unwilling to acknowledge their agency in it—so that, notwithstanding the physician's cross-examination, the truth is seldom elicited. I have often heard people say, in such cases:

"Lord bless you, we were afraid to let the doctor know."

And so the doctor, seeing this failure, may lose faith in his excellent mode of treatment, and in the next case change it for a worse one.

How rational people can trust to the prescriptions of neighbors whom they know to be as ignorant of medicine as themselves, I cannot tell; for if there be any truth in the gibe, that "physicians are men who put drugs, of which they know little, into stomachs of which they know less," it is very certain that most neighbors and visitors of the sick know nothing at all of either drugs or stomach, pharmacy or physiology.

But I must make an end of "oratory," and, skipping at least twenty good illustrations of my caption, come to the last and most affecting instance on the list; and I must introduce it story-fashion, too, lest it should not be read. *Imprimis.*

One fine summer morning, in a neat bedchamber, the floor covered with straw matting, the windows shaded by white muslin curt——! *Miserabili!* Here I am in the midst of another description of another room. I beg the reader's pardon, with all my heart. The subject is trite

(so is everything else, bread and butter and sunshine included); but a bad habit is so hard to shake off. It sticks to one with the fidelity of—of a bad habit. The reader will please to imagine, for himself or herself, the neatest, cleanest, coolest, pleasantest, little summer chamber that can be conceived, so that it comes within the means of a poor journeyman mechanic—for such a one was the father of the two delicate young girls who occupy the room. Upon a little French bedstead, covered with a white counterpane, reposed the fair, fragile form of Annie, the elder of the twin sisters. She was thin, even to emaciation, yet very beautiful as she slept. Her long, black eyelashes rested upon a cheek white as marble, transparent as pearl; her long, black hair, escaped from her cap, floated over the pillow. Her slender, white arm was thrown above her head, across the black tresses. The other sister, Clara, was moving about the room silently, as though fearful of awakening the sleeper. This girl was the *fac simile* of her twin sister, except that she had a burning red color on her cheeks and lips, and an unnatural sparkle in her bright, very bright, eyes. Her slender form was arrayed in a loose white wrapper. The sleeper stirred, murmured, opened her eyes, and said:

"Are you there, Clara?"

"Yes, love; what will you have, dear Annie?" inquired Clara, approaching the bedside softly.

"Give me your hand, Clara. This dear little hand! how lovingly and patiently it has tended me, through this long, long illness. This poor, little, thin hand," said Annie,

fondly playing with her sister's fingers. "But how hot it is, Clara; how very hot your hand is! You are feverish, sister; you have confined yourself too closely. Raise the window a little way to give me air, and then go and take a walk—won't you?"

Clara raised the window, and opened an opposite door, so that a current of air could pass through and ventilate the room, without blowing upon the sick girl. Annie drew a long, deep breath, and smiled.

"That air is so pleasant. It breathes so sweet, and fresh—it gives me new life."

Clara returned to the bedside, and said, cheerfully:

"You are a great deal better this morning, dear Annie!"

"Yes! a great deal better—I slept so well—and have waked up so refreshed. My fever is off, my skin is moist, the heat and tightness have left my chest, and, above all, I can draw a dear, blessed, good, deep breath. Oh, Clara, you can't conceive what a blessing it is to be able to draw a free breath. You would have to be half suffocated for a month, as I have been, in order to realize it."

"You have been a great sufferer, my poor, dear Annie, but thank God—thank God—you are better now. And you look so much better, too," said Clara, suddenly checking the fervor of her feelings, lest it should agitate Annie.

"Now, then, Clara, go out, and take a walk, won't you? Indeed, I'm afraid you will make yourself ill, by such close confinement. Go now—there's a dear."

"Presently, presently, Annie."

"No—now. I'm going to make you go; or, if you

won't, I'll talk, and bring on a fever; or else, as the spoiled children say, 'I'll cry, and make myself ill;' " said Annie, smiling.

"Oh! I am so glad to see you so merry, Annie."

"Will you do as I bid you?"

"After a while—when we've seen Dr. Wood; his carriage is before the door."

"And here he comes up the stairs," said Annie, listening.

The family physician now entered the room. He was an elderly man, with a tall, thin figure, blue-gray hair, and a red face. He walked up to the bedside of his patient, laid his hand upon her forehead, held her wrist, and remarked, cheeringly:

"You are very much improved this morning, my child."

"Oh, yes! Dr. Wood, that last medicine did me a great deal of good. I slept sweetly last night, and I have waked up this morning—so hungry. What can I have to eat?"

"Still thinking of her stomach! Clara, tell John Brown I say he had better go into the eating line. Set up a refectory or something. Annie'll be an excellent helpmate in such a concern; she'll be able to cater for other people's palate by the test of her own."

Clara laughed merrily; but Annie pretended not to hear, and reiterated her complaint and question.

"I want something to eat, doctor. What can I have to eat?"

"Why, you can have roast beef and plum pudding, but you shan't."

"Pshaw! Can I have a cup of coffee, and an egg, and some toast?"

"Yes," said the doctor, complainingly, "you can have a cup of—rice water, and a soda cracker——"

"Oh, doctor!" groaned Annie, making a face.

"Or some good—water-gruel."

Annie turned her head away in disgust.

"Or else some excellent—barley-water."

Annie exhibited strong symptoms of hydrophobia.

"Oh, doctor!" exclaimed she, "can you give me nothing but a choice among the different preparations of—water? Can't I have a little chicken soup?"

"Not for a day or two to come, my child."

The doctor then assured his patient that she was getting well fast, and that by Sunday she should have something savory for dinner, and took his leave.

"Clara! do you hear? The doctor says I shall have something good to eat Sunday, and that is day after to-morrow. And it shall be fried chicken—no!—it shall be stewed oysters. Clara! do you hear? Tell father the doctor says I am to have some stewed oysters by day after to-morrow—do you hear, now?"

"Yes, yes, darling, I hear; I will tell father."

But Clara did not think that the doctor had particularly recommended, nor did she believe that he would particularly approve, the dish selected. However, unwilling to

vex her beloved invalid, she refrained from opposing her now, and followed the doctor out of the room.

"Clara! come back here!"

"Well, darling?" said Clara, returning.

"Come close—ask the doctor, when you get downstairs, if he thinks my lungs are affected—ask him confidentially, you know, and then come up and tell me the truth—will you?"

Clara left the room, and soon returned, with a very cheerful countenance.

"Did you ask the doctor, Clara?"

"Yes, dear Annie; and he assures me that you are not at all consumptive at present, and will never be so, if you take care of yourself. He says that you have been suffering from an attack of neu—neu—I forget, but, anyway, not consumption."

Annie smiled.

"That is a great deal off my mind, dear Clara; I have such a dread of pulmonary consumption; I was so much afraid I had contracted it, and, indeed, I didn't want to die yet."

"And make poor John Brown a widower, before he becomes a husband—to be sure not; but there's no danger these fifty years to come, thanks to our good doctor."

"Yes; thanks to our good doctor, for he is good, Clara; and I feel such a glow of gratitude to him, when I think of all his kindness—his attending poor mother for two

years before she died, and his 'tending me so constantly through this tedious illness——"

"Yes, indeed. And father asked him for his bill last week, and what do you think he said? Why, 'You don't owe me anything, Mr. Gray.'"

"And he with such a large family, too!"

"Yes; he is a poor man himself. But he is like all others of his profession. They do more good, and get less thanks, than any other set of men whatever; they jump up at all hours of the day or night, and in all weathers, to wait upon all sorts of people, rich and poor, paid or not paid—thanked or abused, it is all the same—and they get no credit; it seems to be expected of them, and they do it. I have known a doctor to jump up in the middle of the night, in a severe snowstorm, to visit a poor man with the rheumatism, from whom it would have been folly to have expected pay; and the man, too, seemed to consider it quite a matter of course; and I don't believe he ever even said, 'Thank you, doctor.'"

"Oh, well! he thanked him in his heart, Clara; at least, if he feels like me, he did. I, for one, say, God bless the medical faculty in general, and our own dear old doctor in particular. Oh! Clara, you don't know how grateful one feels toward the person who has conjured away all our bad feelings, and restored us to comfort and enjoyment. And he has raised me almost from the grave. Oh! I love the good doctor so much. And when he laid his hand upon my forehead, just now, I wanted to take the dear, kind hand and press it to my lips and to my

bosom; but that would have been very shocking, I suppose?"

"Very," said Clara, laughing.

"I'm in earnest, though," said the sick girl, as the tears swam in her eyes, "for I love the good doctor more than either of my uncles, and next to my father, for he has 'tended me long and patiently, and saved my life; and I like life, Clara, and I don't like to die. He has taken away all my bad feelings and restored me to enjoyment—all 'without money and without price'—and so I love the doctor, and I shall always love him; and the very next time he comes to see me, I am going to kiss him, and tell him so, to ease my heart; and you see if I don't; for," added the child, petulantly, "I'm sick, and sick people must have their own way."

"To be sure, my pet, so you shall—kiss the doctor or the doctor's dog, or anybody else you please, and as much as you please——"

"Hush! Is not that father singing?" asked Annie.

"Yes, dear; he has been singing at his work all the morning; sawing wood and singing; pumping water and singing; making a fire and singing——"

"Oh, I know," murmured Annie, as an expression of ineffable tenderness came into her face; "dear father! he's singing because I am out of danger."

"Yes; he is so glad. He says, although the doctor won't give him his bill, as soon as he gets his month's pay he will send him a twenty-dollar bill."

"Poor father! He would 'draw the spirit from his breast, and give it' for my sake."

"Hush! here comes Mrs. Brown."

A fat, cozy, grandmotherly-looking matron now entered the room, sat down in the rocking-chair, sighed, and inquired in a sad tone:

"How do you feel this morning, dear?"

"Very much better, I thank you, Mrs. Brown. Clara, love, go down now, and give father his breakfast; it must be near time for him to go to work; and get your own, Clara; you must be faint, you've been up so long. Mrs. Brown will remain with me until your return. Can't you, Mrs. Brown?"

"Yes, yes, to be sure," said the old lady. "Go, Clara, I'll stay with Annie."

Clara left the room.

"There, honey, see what I have brought you, a nice bowl of panado, with port wine in it."

"I am very much obliged to you, indeed, Mrs. Brown, but the doctor says I mustn't take anything stimulating."

"Fiddlestick! You mustn't mind all the doctor says. This is very nourishing; it will strengthen you. Here, taste, and see how good it is."

"It smells very nice," said Annie, looking longingly at the bowl.

"Taste it. Don't be afraid of it. It is very simple."

"It looks very good," said Annie, toying with the spoon, "but I'd rather not eat anything against the doctor's orders."

"Oh, the doctor! You must think the doctor is omnipotent, but I don't. Here, let me raise you up. Don't be afraid, and never mind what the doctor says. Do you think I would give you anything to hurt you? No, I would not, for poor John's sake."

The old lady propped Annie up with pillows, and set the bowl before her. Annie took the spoon, turned about the panado, and placed a morsel to her lips, in a cautious and gingerly manner.

"There! Ain't it good? Poor John went all over town to get that port wine genuine."

"Did John get it?" asked Annie, raising her eyebrows in an inquiring manner, and poising the spoon half-way between the bowl and her lips.

"Yes, he did; went to a dozen places before he could get the real stuff. There, honey, eat it all up."

And with renewed confidence, as if nothing hurtful could come through her lover's hands, Annie did "eat it all up."

Annie had scarcely finished her meal, when the hectic spot appeared upon her cheek, her lips grew bright, and her eyes blazed up with the fearful light of fever.

"There, now!" exclaimed the old lady, as she received the bowl from Annie, "don't you feel better? I told you so! You look like another person. You've got some color now. Oh! if I had you I'd get you up in no time. Dear me! here are all the windows up; this will never do. It will give you your death of cold!" and the grandmotherly old lady let them all down, and shut the door.

The morning was very sultry, and the room soon became very warm.

"Dear Mrs. Brown, this is suffocating; please raise the windows again. The doctor says there must be a free circulation of fresh air in the room."

"My dear child, I shall do no such thing. It might be the death of you. You mustn't put so much dependence in what the doctor says. Sure, if he is such a knowing man, it is a wonder he loses so many patients."

It is a wonder he did not lose all, when Mrs. Brown, who was a regular visitor of the sick, followed, like fate, in his footsteps.

"There, my dear, I hear them coming upstairs. I must be going. I have got to call and see Mrs. Piper's baby; it's got the summer complaint."

"You are very good to the sick, dear Mrs. Brown."

"It's no more than my duty, Annie," said the old lady, with solemn self-complacency. "Good-by, honey; make haste and get well, and be my daughter, you know. John's house is nearly finished. I believe I hear John's voice now downstairs."

Mr. Gray entered the room to bid Annie good-by before going to his work.

"How do you do, Mrs. Brown? Won't you sit?" said he to the old lady.

"Ah! good-morning, Mr. Gray. No, I thank you, I was just going; good-day." And the old lady went downstairs.

"You are looking very well this morning, my pretty Annie," said Gray.

"I am almost well, dear father."

"What is that I must get for you by Sunday, darling?"

"Oh, father! yes; some oysters, some nice Nanticoke oysters, to stew, by Sunday. The doctor says I am to have something nice on Sunday; and so I want oysters."

"Very well, my dear Annie; father will get them," said he, stroking her hair.

"Is John Brown downstairs, father?"

"Yes, darling, waiting to come up. Are you well enough to see him?"

"Oh! yes, dear father; let him come."

"Well, then, my sweet Annie, I must bid you good-by for the present. I'll send him up; and see here, Annie," lowering his voice, "get well, and then—won't we have a fine wedding?" Annie reddened. The father was going out—she recalled him.

"See here, father, make Clara take a walk, will you? She is too much confined."

"Very well. I'll attend to it. Good-by, darling."

"Good-by, dear father. Don't work too hard," said Annie, as she put her arms around his neck, and received his parting kiss.

Annie's next visitor was John Brown, her betrothed, who came in, accompanied by Clara.

"Now, dear Annie," said John, "why didn't you let me come in before? I have a thousand things to tell you about, and not ten minutes to say it in. Why, Annie!

my gracious! how well you are looking! Beautiful! You sick! Why, your cheeks and lips are glowing, and your eyes brighter than I ever saw!" exclaimed John, in admiration, mistaking the burning fire of fever for the blooming rose of health. "Come, you mustn't lie there much longer; you must get up, and come and see my little new house (our little new house, sweet Annie," said he, lowering his voice to a whisper); "it is so pretty—painted lead-color, with close white shutters. I have got the fence put up, and the garden laid off; and I've planted some peas (which we will have for dinner the first time Clara and the old man come to see us, dear); and I want you up, that you may go with me to select some furniture. I have got seventy-five dollars toward it."

"And I have got twenty-five," said Annie, "saved from my needlework."

"Keep it, keep it, darling; surely, if an American lad can't furnish a little house for his bride without taking her earnings, he must be a very worthless fellow."

Annie smiled, but in the midst of her smile an expression of pain traversed her countenance, the color died away from her face for an instant, and then rushed back in a crimson glow. Clara approached the bed, and bent over her, anxiously.

"What is the matter, dear Annie?"

"Nothing—a sharp, sudden pain; it is over now," said Annie.

"A stitch," suggested John.

Annie's face again quivered, grew pale, then flushed. She grasped her sister's hand lightly.

"Dear Annie, you are suffering; you have had too much company; you have been excited and worried. John, go home—that's a good boy; you may come again this evening."

"Good-by, Annie," said John Brown.

"Good-by, good-by," replied Annie.

John Brown was gone.

"Oh! Clara, I am very ill."

"Dear, dear Annie, I am so sorry; where are you sick?"

"I am in excrutiating pain," cried Annie, as her face flushed and paled rapidly.

"I will send for the doctor."

"No, no; he could not be found now; he is on his round. Send for John's mother; she is a sort of doctress; she, perhaps, can think of something to relieve me."

Clara hurried downstairs, overtook John, and sent him for his mother—then hastened back to her sister. Annie was extremely ill. The stimulating food that she had taken had excited a violent inflammation. The old lady, Mrs. Brown, soon came in, exclaiming:

"Well, well; what's the matter now? John came running after me, as though he were crazy. Young people are so quickly frightened—and you all alone by your two selves—pity, poor things, but what you had a mother. What's your misery, Annie?"

Annie explained.

"Ah ha! I knew it. That cold, windy water-gruel has disagreed with you. So much for following after the doctors. Here! Clara, run and fetch me some brandy and ginger, and boiling water. Quick, now! Be in a hurry! She must take some brandy-toddy, with ginger in it. Make haste!"

Mrs. Brown made Clara fly about and bring her all the things. Mrs. Brown was in her glory. Nothing pleased that dear old lady better than to see a fellow-creature writhing in an agony of pain, if the sufferings afforded a fair opportunity for the gratification of her darling propensity—doctoring. It was to her what game was to the sportsman, play to the gambler, or bull-baiting to the Spaniard. Yet Mrs. Brown was called, and believed herself to be, a very benevolent woman, very kind to the sick, and an excellent nurse. The old lady concocted the dose, and carried it to her patient. Annie drank it all, and thanked her poisoner.

"And now, honey," said she, "I must go. I promised to call in and see Mrs. Piper's baby again to-day. The little one is getting no better, although I gave it a dose of medicine of my own preparing. Indeed, I think it is getting worse. They've got that young Dr. Jones attending it. What does he know about babies? Good-by, Anne. That toddy will ease you. You will sleep after it."

And the old lady departed, with the comfortable consciousness of having performed a good action. She met John at the street door, and told him that he might go to

work, as Annie was better, and John, careful not to disturb the sick one, left the house without saying good-by. As may be readily supposed, Annie grew rapidly and alarmingly worse. She suffered excruciating torture. Clara was in despair. She sent for her father, and for the physician. Mr. Gray followed the summons immediately. The doctor came in the afternoon. He never suspected the cause of, and was wholly unable to account for the dreadful change that had taken place in his patient. He taxed his skill to the utmost for her relief. He remained with her all the afternoon; then, promising to return early in the morning, he left her somewhat easier, and went to another patient.

Not far from Mr. Gray's humble dwelling stood a house of more pretentions to quality. It was occupied by Mr. Piper, a rising young lawyer, and his wife. They had one infant, upon whom they both doted with all the fondness of young parents for their first and only child. But now the babe was ill, and the father and the mother wild with alarm. Mr. Piper had called in Dr. Jones, a young physician of eminent talent, one who had already acquired a large practice, and who had effected several remarkable cures. When he arrived at Mrs. Piper's house, he found the pale young mother, with the babe in her arms, walking him about the floor. She sat down, and laid the babe across her lap for the doctor's inspection, watching the expression of his countenance eagerly. He told her that the babe was suffering under only a very slight attack of cholera infantum, and that his recovery

depended more upon her own careful nursing than upon medicine. He charged her to let the child take no food whatever, except that which nature had provided; and, giving a few peremptory but judicious directions for its treatment, he wrote a prescription, and left the house. The doting mother was reassured, and smiled again. In a day or two the babe was much better, though not quite restored to health. He was recovering slowly but surely under the young doctor's excellent method of treatment, when the evil genius of the physician sent the news of the babe's illness to Mrs. Brown, who straightway considered it her "duty" to go and see the sick baby. Upon that fatal morning, something in the appearance of the infant had aroused the very excitable fears of his mother, and she felt and looked very uneasy when Mrs. Brown entered.

"Good-morning, Mrs. Piper. How do you do? I heard that your little one was very ill, and I thought I would step in and see it."

"Indeed, I am very grateful, Mrs. Brown. Please look at him, and tell me how you think he is."

Mrs. Brown took the infant upon her lap, and looked solemnly and wistfully at him; put her hand upon his chest and upon his head, and finally poked her great finger into his mouth, and felt his gums, then turned up the whites of her eyes, and ejaculated:

"Ah, Lord!"

"Oh! Mrs. Brown, you don't say so!" exclaimed the nervous mother, in affright. "Is he so bad?"

"Who is 'tending him?" inquired the old lady, without replying to the question.

"Why, Dr. Jones—Dr. Jones. Oh, is he very ill, Mrs. Brown?"

"Dr. Jones! That young man! Why, t'other day he was no taller than my knee. He a doctor!"

"They say he's a very successful practitioner. But, oh! dear Mrs. Brown, please tell me—is the baby very sick?" said the mother, as the tears rushed to her eyes.

"Pretty sick. What has that young man (I can't call him a doctor) ordered for it?"

"Why, this is it," replied the trembling mother, showing a little folded packet of small powders.

"Umph-humph! Calomel and prepared chalk, I suppose. That will not do it any good. If you keep on giving that to the child, you'll kill it."

"But the doctor——"

"Oh! the doctor! What does he know about babies? He never was a mother. I've had thirteen children—and raised two, and buried eleven, and I should think I ought to understand nursing children."

The infant here became very fretful, and the mother very uneasy, and Mrs. Brown very loquacious and didactic.

"Oh, dear Mrs. Brown, what had I better do?"

"Stop. Have you got any laudanum?"

"Yes; but——"

"Well, get it, girl, and bring me a spoonful of water in a cup."

This direction was given to a maid servant who was standing in the room, and who forthwith brought the required articles.

"What are you going to do, Mrs. Brown?" inquired the mother, who was pacing the floor, with the babe in her arms.

"Give the child a few drops of laudanum."

"Oh! Mrs. Brown, I'm afraid——"

"Never mind what you're afraid of. This is the shortest way to stop the child's complaints. I'm a better judge than you are," persisted the old lady, holding the cup in one hand and dropping the laudanum slowly with the other. The timid young mother suffered herself to be out-talked and overruled. The laudanum was dropped and poured down the babe's throat. The child dropped into a deep sleep.

"There, now! Didn't I tell you so? See how nice he's sleeping. Don't tell me about doctors; one old woman is worth twenty doctors, for curing babies."

"Yes, indeed," assented Mrs. Piper. "He is sleeping now more quietly than he has been for a long time."

"Well, good-morning, my dear child. Whenever you want me, send for me. I am always ready to visit the sick."

"Thank you, dear Mrs. Brown! Indeed, I am very, very grateful to you. You've given my poor baby relief, and you couldn't have done me a greater favor. I shall never forget your kindness," said the poor woman, earnestly.

"I have only done my duty," said the old lady, meekly; and she went off, enjoying the reward of "an approving conscience."

"What an excellent woman!" murmured the mother, as she returned to her infant's cradle, after seeing Mrs. Brown out. But an exclamation of horror broke from her lips as her glance fell upon the child. The infant had waked up in a spasm. A little fretfulness, a slight fever, in the babe, was enough at any time to arouse all the mother's worst fears; but now—now that she saw her child's features convulsed and limbs quivering, in a frightful spasm, her alarm and grief exceeded all description.

At that moment Dr. Jones entered the room, and, seeing the state of the child, he demanded rather peremptorily, as was his custom, what had been given to the babe. And the pale and trembling mother told him, informing him at the same time who had prescribed the dose. Out of his grief and his vexation, the young physician exclaimed:

"By Heaven, madam, she has killed your child!"

"Oh! don't say so, doctor! Don't! don't! I should go mad! Oh, no! It can't be! God would not take my baby away from me, that I love so dearly!"

Losing all self-control, she sank down by the side of the cradle. Her grief became so poignant as to render her incapable of discharging her duties. Seeing the state of affairs, and being ignorant of their family resources, Dr. Jones sent off for Mr. Piper. It was near night

when the babe's spasms went off, and he sunk into a coma.

* * * * * * *

It was the night of the same day upon which Annie Gray had received her death-draught from Mrs. Brown. The doctor had left her comparatively easy a few hours previous. Mr. Gray, poor man, suspecting no danger, had retired to rest. Clara had lighted the night taper, and, setting it upon the hearth, took her seat by her sister. Clara, also, was free from apprehension now; but she could not, she knew not why, make up her mind to go to bed. Annie was lying quite still. She was easy, but with the fatal ease induced by mortification. She was dying, and she knew it.

"Clara!"

"Well, Annie?"

"Won't you lie down, love?"

"Presently, dear Annie; I am not sleepy yet. How do you feel, Annie?"

"Quite easy. Perfectly free from pain of any sort."

"I am so glad," said poor, unsuspicious Clara.

The silence continued unbroken in the room, except by the ticking of the clock, for many minutes. Then Annie called, in a low voice:

"Clara!"

"Well, sister?"

"Look in my little Bible, and bring me that folded paper—and a lead pencil."

"Dear Annie, what is it you want to do? You must go to sleep, darling."

"So I will, very soon, and take a long nap; but give me them first."

"Here they are, then, Annie."

"Raise me up."

"Why, what are you going to do, darling?"

"Just to add four words to that paper."

"Let me do it."

"No."

Annie feebly scratched four words to the end of some writing, and fell back exhausted upon her pillow, retaining the paper in her hand. She lay still a long time, and again the ticking of the clock became awfully distinct. At last again she called:

"Clara!"

"Well, darling?"

"What day is this?"

"Friday, you know, dear. Day after to-morrow you are to have the oysters."

"Friday, Saturday, Sunday. Clara, take this paper, and put it away safely, and do not read it until Monday, and then go by it, will you?"

"Why, what in the world do you mean, dear Annie?"

"Never mind what I mean. Promise me, will you?"

"Yes, love, certainly. Now try to sleep, dear Annie."

"Yes, I will."

Why was the silence in that peaceful room so awful? Why ticked the clock so loud and fast, and why fell its

strokes so heavily upon the heart of the watcher? She did not know it was counting away the last seconds of a dying girl. At length, the dread silence was relieved by the low, sweet music of Annie's voice:

"Clara!"

"Darling?"

"Where is father?"

"Gone to bed."

"Give my love to him."

"Annie! Annie! What do you mean?"

"Nothing, only he forgot to kiss me."

She lay again silent for a few moments; then for the last time called, lowly:

"Clara!"

(She seemed to love the iteration of her sister's name.)

"What now, love?"

"Tell dear John Brown I say God bless him."

"Annie! Annie! Oh! dear me, what is the matter with you? I am—I'm so uneasy. I—I'll call up father," cried Clara, as in her fright she seized the taper, and flashed its light upon her sister's face.

Annie's face was white as marble, but a sweet smile hovered over it. Clara's countenance was blanched to a "violet paleness," and she shook in every limb.

"Don't look so frightened, dearest sister; I'm going to sleep now."

"Are you at ease?"

"Perfectly. Kiss me."

Clara pressed her warm lips to the cold brow of the

dying girl. Reassured, she resumed her seat. Clara was nervous. Oh! why did that clock tick so loud and fast, and why jarred its strokes so heavily upon the excited nerves of Clara? It counted away, fast and faster, the fleeting seconds of the parting seraph.

"Father! Clara! John!" whispered Annie.

Clara bent over her sister, and looked silently on her face. Her eyes were closed, her countenance was still, save for the smile that still hovered upon her lips.

"She is talking in her sleep," thought Clara.

"Mother! mother!" murmured the dying girl.

Again Clara looked upon her sister's face, but it was perfectly still; even the smile had fled. Annie Gray's gentle spirit had passed away.

"She has gone sound asleep at last, thank God," said Clara.

Morning dawned. Mr. Gray rapped at his daughter's chamber door, to inquire how Annie had slept. Clara opened the door.

"What! been up all night, poor Clara? Could you get no one to sit up but yourself?"

"I could not have left Annie, father."

"How does she seem?"

"Better. Still sleeping."

"Thank Heaven!"

The father hurried away from the door, to finish dressing. After having raised the window and opened the blinds, Clara returned to her beloved sleeper, and looked upon her face. The face was cold and stiff—the eyes

half open, and stony—the blue lips were apart, and the white teeth glistening between them. The hand that Clara had taken fell heavily from her grasp. With a heart-rending cry, Clara cast herself upon the body of her sister, and fainted. That cry brought the father back into the room. The father was a strong man. He suffered, as he gazed upon his dead Annie, as deeply as Clara had, yet no tear sprung to his eye—no groan broke from his lips. The muscles of his iron face worked convulsively—his broad chest heaved, as he stood some moments looking upon the sisters. Then, gently lifting the insensible Clara from the body, he bore her to the next room, laid her upon the bed, and calmly walked downstairs to send for Mrs. Brown. That benevolent lady was not at home. She was occupied with laying out Mrs. Piper's baby, which had just expired. Some other neighbors, however, tendered their services to see to things.

* * * * * * *

Sunday came—the Sunday of poor Annie Gray's funeral. Clara had exhausted her strength by giving way to the wildest expression of grief and despair, and now lay prostrate upon the very same bed on which Annie had yielded up her gentle spirit. Clara lay quivering, gasping, fainting, under the weakness induced by a violent outbreak of sorrow. Low moans and sighs were all that escaped her now. The rooms below stairs were filling with funeral guests. Mrs. Brown, who had taken the direction of affairs, was in a high state of excitement and business. Poor Mr. Gray was standing about in

everybody's way, having nothing to do, looking heart-broken, gazing into vacancy. Mrs. Brown, in her flying hither and thither, ran against him, and nearly overturned him; started, begged his pardon, and asked him for his hat, "to pin a piece of crape 'round it." Poor Gray put his hand to his head, and looked around in perplexity.

"Your hat, Mr. Gray—your hat, if you please, to pin a piece of crape on it."

His face worked convulsively. He gave her the hat, and turned away. The old lady looked at him, and said, while she fixed his hat:

"Dear! dear! Mr. Gray, don't take on so—don't. Bear this like a man—a Christian man. Annie's gone to heaven. She was a sweet, good——"

"Don't, don't," whispered poor Gray.

"But I must—I must talk to you. It's for your own good. You know I'm your best friend, don't you?"

"I know you have been very kind to me and mine, Mrs. Brown. You were like a mother to the poor girl that's—that's——"

"That's gone. Yes; and if she had taken my advice, instead of following after doctors, from the first, she would have been living now."

"God bless you, Mrs. Brown—God bless you. I shall never forget your kindness to the poor, motherless girl. May God reward you."

Should not that blessing have "heaped coals of fire upon her head?"

"I've tried to do my duty, Mr. Gray," said the self-

sufficient old lady, as she moved off with a bundle of white cambric for the hack-drivers' hats.

In the meantime, Clara lay upon the bed in the upper room. The guests continued to arrive. She heard their slow steps, their murmuring tones, and their whispered condolements. At last all was still. Then the tones of the clergyman's voice were heard, as he read the sublime funeral service of the Episcopal Church. At length his voice ceased. Then, by the moving of many feet, and the slow rolling of carriage wheels, Clara knew that the corpse was being borne out, and that the funeral procession was in the act of being formed.

"Farewell, Annie! Farewell, playmate! Farewell, sister!"

These words burst from her lips in heart-breaking sobs, many, many times; and as long as the retreating sound of the wheels was heard, she gasped, from time to time:

"Farewell, Annie! Farewell, dear Annie!"

"How often," says a celebrated divine, "is the excitement of thought and feeling so great that but for the interruptions of humble cares and trifles—the interpositions of a wise Providence—the mind and frame would sink under them entirely!"

The mechannic's daughter could not indulge her sorrow in inaction. Her father would be coming back, bringing his brothers to supper. So, after a while, she was compelled to arise. She bathed her eyes, and went into the kitchen to prepare the meal.

On Monday morning Clara thought of her sister's

paper. She went to seek it. It merely contained some common but too much neglected rules for the preservation of health. It was evidently written for Clara. It was dated a month back, at a time at which, as Clara recollected, Annie had despaired of recovery. The four concluding words were written upon the last night of her existence, and in very unsteady characters. It was headed:

'Annie's Legacy to the Consumptive.

You are, or you believe yourself to be, consumptive. You wish, above all things, for health and strength. You are poor, and wish that you were able to buy some of the patent, all-curing, all-promising specifics advertised in the newspapers. Thank God, rather, for the poverty that prevents your purchasing. Taking patent medicines is like drinking in the dark, where some of the vessels are filled with wholesome drink and some with deadly poisons. You may chance upon the right draught, or you may not. It is a great risk. But the medicines for your debility are cheap—cheap as sunshine; and safe—safe as nature. They are—air, water, exercise, diet. There is nothing original in the rules I am about to transcribe. They are as old as common sense. You may read them in many books and newspapers, and hear them at lectures; but yet you may not heed them more than I did, before it was too late. Perhaps, though, when they come as a legacy from your sister, who has lost health and life by the neglect of them, why, then, they may exercise all the

moral influence of "the last dying speech and confession" of a man about to be hanged.

1. Bathe in tepid water every day. The "benefit of bathing can only be justly estimated by those that practice it." Wear flannel winter (and summer, too, if you can bear it) next your skin. It will keep the skin in a healthful condition.

2. Take a walk every fine day. But that will not be exercise enough, or of the kind, for a consumptive. Make beds, rub tables, sweep, or do something else that will exercise the arms and chest. Sing or read aloud.

3. Ventilate your rooms, air your bedding, clothing, etc., every day. The lungs require pure air, as well as the palate requires pure water. Item: Do not keep a stove in your common sitting-room; what it saves in fuel, it costs in health. I have found from experience that the burnt air from hot stoves, and the thick vapor from anything that may be cooking upon it, is very unpleasant, and very injurious to weak lungs. Use a fireplace or a Franklin stove in preference; for then everything injurious is carried up the chimney.

4. If you can, leave off gradually the use of strong tea and coffee. They keep up a slow, consuming fever in your system (it has been so with me); drink milk instead. When you are feverish, do not use pepper, mustard, spice, etc., in your food. Try this way of living for a month; and if you are not stronger, take the advice of a regular practitioner. Never take neighbors' prescriptions.

Reader! Poor Annie's rules were not neighbors' prescriptions; they were mostly taken from a work recently published by an undeniable M. D.

After Clara had in some measure got rid of her grief she set about getting rid of her consumption. I am happy to say that she has succeeded. She certainly looks much heartier, and I think she will be a robust woman yet. I do not think John Brown's little new house will want a mistress long. John Brown commenced by grieving with Clara, continued by loving her for Annie's sake, and ended by loving her for her own sake.

But, reader, a word in your ear: Mrs. Brown is at large yet, and busy as ever—so take care.

ACROSS THE STREET.

A NEW YEAR'S STORY.

The poor ye have always with you.—JOHN xii. 8.

Ah! little think the gay and laughing crowd
Whom pleasure, power, and affluence surround,
Ah! little think they, as they dance along,
How many pine in want or drink the cup
Of misery! Sore pierced by wintry winds,
How many shrink into the sordid hut
Of cheerless poverty!—THOMSON.

How gay seemed the city on New Year's eve! How crowded the markets, and how crowded the shops; how full the pantries, and how busy the kitchens! Every heart seemed full to overflowing, with life, and hope and hilarity—yet no, not every heart. Away, in obscure streets, in filthy alleys, and in dark and dismal dwellings, in forgotten neighborhoods, cowered and shivered many a cold and hungry body, to whom Christmas brought no joy, but rather an aggravation of misery, by bringing out into stronger relief the contrast between the comfortable position of their happier neighbors, and their own sordid wretchedness.

Such a contrast might be seen on —— street, running from the avenue south down to the canal. There stands on the east side of the street a row of low-roofed, one-story, framed houses. They are of a dirty white color, and lean forward as if about to fall. They each have one door and window below, and two little square windows above, facing the street; but the doors are off the hinges, and the glass broken out of the windows, and its place filled with old hats, clothes, etc. It would be curious, doubtless, to pry into the history of each wretched family in this miserable row.

Doubtless, drunkenness has had much to do with it. I think so, because drunkenness seems to be the only vice upon which one never thrives. But the corner house at the northern end seems almost a redeeming feature in the row. For see, the door has two hinges, though the bottom one is of leather; and the want of glass is supplied with clean paper, pasted on. It is that northeastern corner house, in that front room so exposed to the blast, that you and I will peep to see what the inmates are doing. But before we go in, just look across the street, and see—there is but one house on the whole square, and that is a very handsome one with a large courtyard on each side and back of it. Now we will go in and observe. The room is very bare, floor uncarpeted, and the planks full of chinks, through which the wind blows, freezing the feet. That searching wind! it comes in everywhere. It shakes the unsheltered north end of the house (and the room), and it rattles the windows on the west. Whew,

this cold room! it would take so much fire to warm it; yet there is not a spark on that cold hearth. True, there is an old charcoal furnace in the room, containing a few coals, in which a couple of flat-irons are heating. A poor, jaded, sickly woman is ironing at a table; the door opens now, and a little boy enters with a small basket of coal, which it seems he has picked up about the streets.

"This is all that I could find, mother."

"Never mind; put them on, Willie; they will serve to keep the irons hot till I finish these clothes," answered the mother, as the boy threw a basket of chips on the fire. "And then, Willie, you and I will go and carry them home; and then, when I get the money—it's a dollar and a 'levenpence that Mrs. Patton owes me—we will go through the market, and see if we can find a nice rabbit, or something for to-morrow's dinner; we must keep Christmas, Willie, if we suffer the rest of the week, for it was the day our dear Saviour was born, you know, Willie."

"Yes, I know. Will you buy some molasses, and flour, and ginger, and make a few cakes? And, oh, mother, will you buy some peppermint drops for poor little Lizzy, poor little thing; she's got no father."

"Bring me an iron, Willie, and hush," said the woman, as she turned away and rubbed her check apron across her eyes. "You bother me. My gracious alive, child, can't you see that money's hard to come at? One must stop somewheres; it won't do to be so extravagant." The little one handed the iron, and sighed as he sat down.

"There," said she, "mother's not mad with you, child, poor little fellow! but she is not able to get so many things. She's got wood to buy."

"I can fetch chips."

"What, with snow on the ground, Willie?"

"Oh, I forgot."

"Now, then, Willie, wipe your nose and tie your shoes, and get ready to go with me. Stay, your hat won't stay together any longer, I see. Crawl under the bed and get your poor father's fur cap out of the box."

"Too big."

"Never mind, it will come down over your ears and keep the back of your neck warm. There, ain't that nice?"

"Yes, indeed, it's as warm as anything."

Then the poor woman sat down and took a pair of thin slipshod shoes, and sewed strings to the back to keep them up at the heel, and brushed and straightened her crumpled bonnet, put on her shawl, and giving one basket of clothes to her son, and taking another herself, went into the street.

After trudging through the snow for four squares, they turned the corner and came upon the avenue. How lively and beautiful it looked! The western sunlight streamed down the street, as down a vista, lighting up the gay windows of the toy-shops and the confectioneries. The pavements and shops were thronged with people making purchases for New Year's.

"Oh, mother, look! look! Do stop and look at this beautiful window; such beautiful monkeys, and drums, and guns, and great dolls and things. Oh, mother, how much money would it take to buy that dear little doll for baby?"

The child pulled his mother's hand so hard, and looked so eager, that she was fain to stop; and she, too, became interested in the scene. There was a portly, motherly-looking woman coming out of the shop, with a basket on her arm, followed by a gang of children, their hands full of gingerbread, nuts, etc.; and peeping out from under the basket-cover were to be seen the feet of dolls, ends of drums, etc. This woman was good-natured, and smiled on the child as she passed.

"There, mother, that woman has bought ever so many things for her children. Why can't you buy something for me and baby?"

"I keep telling you, Willie, that I'm poor, very poor, and not able, and you keep forgetting. Willie, I've got something to show you now." And she took him half a square on, where a milliner's and a dry goods merchant's shops were side by side. "There, Willie, ain't they nice bonnets?"

"Yes, indeed, mother."

"And ain't that a nice warm shawl?"

" 'Tain't nothing else!"

"Don't say that, Willie; it's wicked, that is; not wicked, but not genteel. Well, then, you see that nice

bonnet and shawl; now look at mother's. Isn't it thin, and isn't her bonnet old and ugly?"

"Yes, indeed."

"Well, I tell you, Willie, that mother looks with as much longing on this window as you looked on that. So you are not the only one. Mother wants things she can't get as well as you do."

"Well, mother, don't fret; when I get to be a man, I'll work hard, and give you all the money, and only keep a half-dollar myself to show to the boys."

"God bless you, my poor, dear child. I know you will be a blessing to me. Yes, Willie, mother will try this evening to get you something pretty, that she will; because you've been a good boy, and will be a blessing to me."

"Yes, that's what I will; and not go away and leave you, like my father!"

"You bad boy! Oh, that is very wicked. Who put that into your head?"

"Mrs. Ryley told me."

"Told you what?"

"Told me how I was the image of my father, but hoped I wouldn't be such a good-for——"

"There, hush! You mustn't say such things. It's very wicked. Your poor, dear father, too, who was killed in Mexico, defending his country."

They crossed the busy avenue now, and turned down D street, where they went in at the side gate of a comfortable-looking framed house, the residence of a sub-

stantial mechanic, for whose family Mrs. Jones washed. They knocked at the back door and were admitted into a large, well-warmed kitchen. Yes, it was so, so comfortable. There stood the large Union cooking stove, glowing and roaring with fire; and there stood a great, fat, greasy-looking colored woman, in the act of taking a pan of cakes from the oven; and all along upon the lower dressers were ranged mince pies, waiting to be put away; and before a table stood the mistress of the house, with her sleeves rolled up above her elbows, cutting out cakes, and at the end of the table stood her daughter, beating up eggs. She turned as Mrs. Jones came in, and said:

"Oh, have you brought the things, Sally? Here, Rebecca, you take them. Are they well aired?"

"No, ma'am; I was short of wood."

"You ought always to bring them home well aired! Well, Rebecca, hang them to the fire upstairs in my room. Won't you go to the stove and warm yourself?"

Mrs. Jones led her son to the stove, and stood waiting, to see if her employer would offer her payment.

"Take a chair," said the colored woman, setting one.

She took it, and there they sat, the mother and son, who had eaten nothing since breakfast; there they sat, inhaling the provoking savor of freshly-baked mince pies and cakes. And as the colored woman wiped cake after cake with a clean napkin, and laid them one by one in a basket, the hungry child followed her eagerly with his eyes, until his mother twitched his arm and rose to de-

part, for the sun was getting low. She went to the table where the "lady" was busy, and said, modestly, "You know how much that little bill of mine is now, ma'am."

"Yes; seventy-five cents."

"No, ma'am; if you please to count up you will see."

This was an expensive time with Mrs. Patton; so she must screw for the thirty-seven cents difference.

Here followed an altercation, in which, as usual, the weaker party had to yield; and Mrs. Jones finally said:

"Well, ma'am, let it be seventy-five cents; and if you could make change, I should be very much obliged to you to let me have it now."

"I always pay all my bills the third of the month, when Patton gets paid off. Come the third of January; I'll pay you then."

"Yes, madam, but I'm very much in want of it."

"Well, you shall have it, I tell you. It's good, you know. Come next week."

"But, indeed, I am very much——"

"Dear me! Was ever any one so worried? I tell you, my money's good; and I really can't pay you till next week."

"Come, Willie, we must go home."

"Oh, my dear Willie," said the mother, as she left the house, "what shall we do now? It's night, almost, and clouding up as if there was going to be more snow, and we with not even a chip to light a fire with when we get back."

"Oh, mother, the smell of the nice cakes has made me

so hungry. Let's go through market, anyhow, mother; I want to buy three cakes for us and baby."

"What with, Willie?"

"Oh, with my cent the colored woman gave me. I know she'd given me a cake if they'd been hers."

So they went into market, poor things, strangely but naturally impelled to aggravate their sense of privation by looking on the good things that they couldn't buy. Some of my readers know what the market on Christmas eve at night is with the stalls all lighted up, and the light shining down on abundance of all sorts of good things.

"Oh, mother, ain't here a sight of meat?" said Willie, as they walked between the butchers' heaped-up stalls.

The widow sighed a reply.

How lost they seemed in that jolly scene! Every one was buying and selling, bargaining, laughing and chatting. The spirit of frugality seemed banished from the market that night, and money, the vital fluid of the world, flowed as briskly through the market as blood through a young man's veins.

Willie bought with his cent three very small cakes, "one for mother, and one for me, and one for baby," he said; and then they went home, not starving and freezing, exactly, but with an appetite whetted to the keenest edge by the fresh and frosty air. Oh, reader, would it not have been comfortable for them if they could have gone home with a full basket to a warm room, a glowing fire and a good supper? It was snowing very fast now, and the wind was driving it fiercely in their faces. The

flakes of snow, sharp with frost, seemed to cut into the pores of their skin, and find its way over the folds of their clothes, wetting them through, and over the tops of their old shoes, soaking their feet. The poor woman struggled on through the driving and whirling snowstorm, holding on her bonnet with one hand, and dragging Willie with the other. Oh, reader, if you had known this, would you not have hastened to kindle a fire on that cold hearth and spread with food that bare board? Oh! if you would, it is not too late yet. "The poor shall never cease from the earth." And just over the way, perchance, or around the corner, in the next street or alley may, nay, must, be suffering equal or greater than I here depict. Dear reader, the poor in thine own immediate neighborhood are thy poor—the legacy of Christ to thee. "The poor ye have always with you." And if Providence has, as it were, dropped them immediately in your way, for the purpose, it may be, of eliciting from you a spirit of Christian love, do not shut your eyes, and close your heart, and pass them by. Do not try to shift the responsibility on to public charities; they can do but little. Do not withhold from "thy poor" the food and raiment for which they are suffering—the work with which they might supply their own wants—the advice and the sympathy that would encourage them to effort.

The mother and son reached home. The snow was banked up against the door. They pushed the door open, and the snow fell in upon the floor.

"Oh, dear, mother, I believe my sock is froze to the

bottom of my foot; I can't get it off," cried the child, as he tried to divest his feet of their cold, wet covering. And so it was.

"Stop, Willie," said his mother; "I must put your feet in cold water, or else they'll be frost-bitten." But when she went to the bucket the water was frozen. At this moment, too, the baby awoke, and began to cry piteously.

"Here, mother, give babe this cake; never mind mother, I can get my stockings off now. I held my warm hands to them; my hands were warm, because I kept them in my pockets."

His mother handed him a pair of dry socks out of "the box under the bed."

"Mother, what have we got for supper, anyhow?"

"Hurrah for New Year's!" shouted a voice in the street.

The woman went to a basket in the corner and looked into it, saying: "We have got about a dozen potatoes, Willie—if we only had a little fire to boil them with; but, dear me, they are all frozen hard—frozen hard, like my heart; for now, though I see my poor things suffering, I cannot even have a good cry." And in proof thereof the poor woman burst into a copious flood of tears. Willie ran and twined his greasy jacket sleeves around her neck. "Don't cry, mother; there, don't cry; indeed, I'll be good, and not ask for supper;" which only made "mother" cry the more.

"What is the bustle, then, mother? Has our Father in Heaven gone and left us, too?"

"Oh, no, Willie; what makes you ask such a question?"

"Why, when father left us, and you were sick, and baby came, you said how we had a Father in Heaven, who would 'never leave' us, 'nor forsake us;' and you used to repeat texts about him—I remember them yet."

The mother drew her arm around his waist and kissed him as she said:

"Repeat them to me, Willie; they will comfort me."

"'Cast all your care upon Him, for He careth for you.'"

"Yes, I will. Go on."

"'Do not two sparrows sell for a farthing? Verily I say unto you, not one of them shall fall to the ground without your Father. Fear not, therefore; ye are of more value than many sparrows.'

"'Behold the fowls of the air; they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns, yet your Heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?

"'Therefore, take no thought, saying, What shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or wherewithal shall we be clothed, for your Heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.'"

"Oh, the gracious promises! Oh, the gracious Father! Kneel down, Willie, and place your little hands together,

and ask our Father to remember us in our need, and 'give us our daily bread.'"

And the little child, nothing doubting, raised his infant voice and pure heart in supplication to his Heavenly Parent. And when at last he arose and met his mother's eyes, her tears had fled, and her face beamed down on him like the face of an angel.

"How beautiful you are, dear mother—how beautiful you are now. You look just as you used to look when father came home form his work, and you took the baby up to show him."

"Woor-or-rah! for New Year's!" shouted another voice, rushing past the house. At the same time the snap of torpedoes sounded on the sidewalk, and Willie, childlike, ran to the window and looked out. The boys with their rattle-traps had gone past.

"It's done snowing, mother—that's a blessing," said he; and then the house across the street fixed his attention.

"It's five o'clock, mother; the gentleman has come home, and he's got three pairs of little shoes dangling on his arm; that's for Rose, and Ella, and Johnny," said Willie, as a thin, stooping, yellow-visaged man bent on toward the house and entered. He was followed by a boy wheeling a handcart, filled with all sorts of good things. He could afford it. He was a clerk, in the receipt of a good salary, and his wife and daughter kept a select, first-class day school.

The evening waned.

"Our Father has sent us nothing yet, mother," said Willie.

"My dear child—my poor, silly child—listen! God does not always grant our prayers, but sometimes, for good and wise purposes, withholds compliance with them."

"But our Father is good—so good; and I asked Him so faithful. I'm sure something will turn up, mother."

And the child climbed up and leaned his chin upon the back of a chair that was sitting against the window, and gazed out; but gusts of wind rattled the glass, and a driving snowstorm darkened the air.

Night was coming on, yet still the child, kneeling upon the chair, clasping its back with his little hands and pressing his thin, sharp face against the panes, looked out, shivering, when the wind rushed against and through the crevices of the old window.

Night was coming on, and the handsome house across the street was lighted up. The blinds were not yet closed, and the light glowed through the crimson curtains upon the snow, making the street rosy red. And it pleased the child's little, unselfish heart to see it, and to think how light and warm it must be in that room, and how happy the children there must feel. At length a colored boy came out and closed the blinds, and the little one could no longer see the light from the warm room. He could no longer see anything from his cold post; so he got down, and, going up to his mother, said:

"Let me say my prayers and go to bed, mother;" and

as he drew off his socks, he said: "It's no use to hang up my stockings to-night, mother."

About the same hour that Willie and his mother went to carry home the washing, within that comfortable house across the street, in a close back room warmed by an airtight stove, sat a pale, dyspeptic, anxious-looking woman. Upon the bed, and over chairs, lay various articles of unfinished finery; over her lap a handsome visite, upon which she was sewing a rich, heavy fringe. She would pause occasionally to lean her head upon her hand, or place her hand upon her side, and sigh and go on again. A ring at the street door was soon followed by the entrance of a lady younger than the worker, who came forward, and, saluting her by the name of cousin, remarked:

"I left a woman below stairs, who came in with me. She wants to know if you have any needlework to put out."

"Tell her no, I have none. Go tell her, Ella." (This was to a little girl.)

"Yet you seem to have a great deal to do, cousin."

"Yes! I have, and I'm almost worn out."

"Well, then, why in the world don't you put some of it out?"

"Because I'm not able, Harriet."

"And why are you not able?"

"Why? because our income is very moderate, and our expenses are heavy; house-rent and the grocery bill—and marketing and wood—keeping three fires—and the girls

must dress. Yes! and there is the doctor's and the druggist's bill to be paid soon—they always render it the first of the year. Now I beg of you to tell me how I can put out my sewing; and tell me if you think it would be right for me to do so?"

This was said in a tone of querulous irony, but the younger lady replied good-humoredly:

"With pleasure. In the first place, you are confined to your schoolroom all day long, except Saturday, when you are going through the house setting things in order—and Sunday, when you go to church—is it not so?"

"Yes."

"Very well. That leaves you only evening for healthful relaxation, such as visiting, walking, conversation, light reading, or active domestic duties."

"Yes."

"Then a good portion of your evening should be given up to such healthful relaxation. Again, you are well paid for teaching, are you not?"

"I am paid."

"Very good. Then you should be content, and not covetous—giving the poor needlewoman a chance to live also; dispensing to them a portion of your work. Now, this is my notion of the division of labor. Would not this be only just?"

"Ah! I can't afford it."

"But I will convince you that you can afford it. You are subject to indigestion, sick headaches, loss of appetite, etc., and you have to take pills, and sometimes you

have a serious bilious attack, and have to call in a physician, at a dollar a visit. Is it not so?"

"Sometimes."

"Yes, oftentimes. Now, I am going to assure you that, if, when you come out of school, instead of sitting down at your needlework from four o'clock to eleven or twelve, you would only take a walk for an hour or two every evening, your health would be better, and you would save more dollars in physicians' visits. Those same dollars you might pay to some poor woman for doing that portion of your needlework that would have been done in the hours you devoted to healthful exercise."

The lady smiled ironically.

"That is a narrow view," she said. "You are benefiting one portion of the community at the expense of another."

"What, the doctors! Don't you believe it. Be you never so careful of your own health, there are fools enough in the world who are ruining theirs with tight lacing, and heavy clothing, thin shoes, and hot stoves, and close rooms, and other malpractices. The doctors will live. But, come, will you not now put out a portion of your sewing?"

"I can't, I tell you! The girls and myself must dress genteelly."

"Ah! there it is. You don't mind if your eyes are red, and your face pale, and your countenance dejected, so that French flowers bloom on each side of the pale

cheek, and a costly shawl is folded over the weak chest, nor how the poor body inwardly suffers, if it is outwardly adorned."

"But these things should be bought, not only for our own gratification, but to encourage art and usefulness."

"True; but people in moderate circumstances should use them in moderation; and you should allow the poor workwoman an opportunity of encouraging manufactures, too, albeit it may be of a coarser description," said Miss Harrit, smiling.

"Well, you ought to go and talk to Mrs. Brown; she has nine in family to sew for, and dresses them all handsomely; and she never puts out a bit of her sewing, though her husband gets fifteen hundred a year. And there's Mrs. Rice, and Mrs. Briggs, and Mrs. Stone, all having large families, all doing their own sewing, and all sickly, although their husbands are getting good salaries. You had better go and talk to them."

"I wish sincerely I had the privilege, for I believe these ladies act from a mistaken sense of duty, in endeavoring to make a little money go as far as possible. They believe that they are doing good service by sitting up half the night toiling to economize money, that they may spend it on rich apparel. With eyes intent upon one point of economy, they lose sight of other points, and often realize a small gain at great loss. For instance: by sewing half the night, they can save money to procure fringe of a little greater depth, and richer or more costly feather and flowers, at a loss of health, cheerful-

ness and beauty. It is not the fault of the men, for I believe they would all prefer that their wives and daughters cared more for their health and beauty and less for the finery.

"I am sure that our women do not want benevolence or good sense, but they want time and opportunity for observing and understanding the distress that is caused by withholding their work from the poor. I wish they could see as I, who live among them, have seen, a poor widow surrounded by her children, whom she is obliged to keep from school on account of their destitution of shoes and clothes, sitting over a miserable fire, or partaking of a wretched meal—a corn griddle-cake broken up among them—and know that this is not an extraordinary, but an everyday affair, and hear her say that if she could but get sewing enough she would do so well, and hear her complain that the 'ladies do all their own work' now. I know that ladies would cheerfully assist her; and when, in addition to all her other misery, she is laid upon a sickbed—I know that women would sacrifice their dearest piece of finery to relieve her wants."

"Oh! dear, you are drawing a fancy picture; it is not so?"

"It is so. Very close to my own home there are two such cases of extreme destitution for the want of work —come and see for yourself. And how many more in other parts of the city, God only knows."

The lady was engaged in deep thought for a few minutes, and then said:

"Well, I'll tell you what, my arrangements are nearly all complete for this year, but next year I will adopt a different plan. I will walk out with you after school hours and see, and carry some of my needlework to one of these poor women you speak of."

"No; I will take care of my two families. I have divided my own needlework among them, and shall take care to procure from our own neighborhood work for our own particular poor, first; then, if we have more, we will give it to others. Do you do likewise—look after the poor of your own immediate neighborhood. To wit: there is a row of houses just across the street—visit them; no need to go out of your own ward."

The younger lady soon after took her leave, and the elder lady exclaimed, as the street door closed behind her:

"Thank God, that old *quidnunc* is gone. Heavens! haven't I been worried? Now I'll finish the visite."

An hour after this, the happy family group were assembled in the front parlor. The father had come home from market, and the mother and children were there, gathered around the glowing grate, telling each other what a severe change there had been in the weather, and wondering how long the cold would last, and how deep the snow would be, etc. Ella, the youngest girl, was looking out upon the storm. At last she turned her great blue eyes around, and said:

"Mother, I don't believe there has been a spark of fire in that house across the street to-day; and there's a little

boy lives there, big as me, and he has not got any brothers and sisters to play with, neither."

"How do you know, Miss Ella?" inquired her mannish little brother, joining her.

Ella protruded her full red lips, and disdained to reply to impertinent questions.

"What makes you think that there has been no fire there, Ella?" inquired her father.

"Because, father, there has been no smoke coming out of the chimly all day."

"'Chimly' now, 'chimly'—that's a pretty way to talk!" interposed Johnny.

"Yes, it is! Father, make Johnny let me alone."

"Johnny, hush! Do you know who lives there, Ella?"

"A little boy, big as me."

"Big as me—how do you parse that?" said Johnny, *sotto voce*.

"Father!"

"If I have to speak to you again, Master Johnny, I shall send you off to bed."

"Well, Ella! A little boy, you say, and who else?"

"Why, a tortoise-shell pussy cat, and a speckled rooster, and a woman. There used to be a man lived there, but I reckon he's gone away. I haven't seen him for a good while. There's the pussy cat now, sitting in the garret window, washing her face. I wonder if her foot's got well; she used to limp when she walked."

Mr. Wood was now looking out at the opposite house. An expression of pain came into his face, and he said:

"My dear soul, wife! I do believe it is as she says. Good Heavens! to think of being without a fire on such a night as this!"

"I reckon pussy's foot was frost-bit. Let her and the little boy come here to live, pa! They can sit by our fire," interposed Ella.

"Who are the people, wife; do you know?"

"Indeed, I don't, poor creatures. But I'll warrant they are intemperate."

"No, it ain't, mother, it's Link," said Ella.

"What do you say, Ella?"

"I say the little boy's name is Willie Link; Susan says so."

"Wife, we must see if they are in want; call Susan up."

Susan happened to know the circumstances of the family, and gave every needful information.

Sarah Jones, ten years before, had been a young, healthy, happy country girl. She had married a young mechanic, and removed to Washington. For a few years they lived comfortably, and then he "took to drink," and then followed the usual train of circumstances—the funeral train of happiness. Lower and lower, year by year, he sank into intemperance and brutality. One by one the children that had been born to them fell victims to want and misery, until none remained but one sickly boy and a young babe. At last the war with Mexico broke out, and Jones enlisted, and that was the last his poor wife had heard of him. The poor woman was without a trade and without friends; and, besides, she was country bred,

bashful and inexperienced, and so could do little for herself and children.

"What! Jones, the carpenter who volunteered? Why, wife, I owed that poor fellow a small balance on the work he did here. I did not know his family lived so near us. We must do something for them now, and I will pay to-morrow."

Accordingly, a basket was procured, which Mrs. Wood filled with a paper of tea, coffee and sugar, a piece of cold mutton, a pie, and a piece of cheese, and sent it over by Susan, who was accompanied by a boy with a wheelbarrow of wood. Johnny's feelings came out strong under the circumstances. He sent "his all," a fig pound-cake and a cent's worth of firecrackers. Ella sent a doll with its head broken off. All Ella's effects were in a dilapidated condition.

It was dark and freezing in that miserable room where the poor woman was undressing her hungry boy.

"There, Willie, kiss me; God bless you. Go to bed and sleep, and forget that you are hungry!"

Just at that moment there was a rap at the door. The mother and child trembled. Who could be coming that dark, cold night?

"Come in," said the mother, faintly.

And the latch was lifted, and a sound of footsteps, and of something set heavily down upon the floor, was heard; a lucifer match was scraped on the wall, and a light was struck that revealed the scene. There stood Susan with her baskets.

"Mrs. Wood has sent you some things, ma'am," said Susan, showing them. "Come in, Jim, with the wood."

The boy brought an armful of wood in and threw it on the hearth, while Susan lit a candle and handed him some paper to start the fire, which soon blazed up the chimney. Then Susan filled the kettle and hung it on, and pulled out the table and set out the good things upon it, saying:

"You must excuse me for taking so many liberties, Mrs. Jones, as you are poorly and tired."

"Oh, you are very good—very good, indeed—too good. I shall never be able to repay you, or Mrs. Wood, either."

"Never mind, we may, any of us, want a good turn sometime or other," said Susan, making the tea; and then the good girl departed.

What a magic change was wrought in that cold room; how bright, and glowing, and genial the fire was—how warm to their chilled limbs; and fragrant smelled the tea —the rare luxury.

"Oh, mother, we are glad, ain't we glad? I say, mother, ain't we in luck?"

"Don't say that, Willie. Thank our Heavenly Father, who hath given us meat in due season."

"I do! indeed I do so. Oh, mother, let's wake poor baby to give her some tea. She was so hungry that little cake warn't nothing."

"Hunger will wake her soon, poor little thing! Run round to Mrs. Bayley's and get a cent's worth of milk against she wakes."

Willie did his errand in a twinkling, and then returned.

And now, dear reader, we will leave Willie and his mother, with the babe in her arms, sitting down to the supper, before the fire that their kind neighbor had provided, and follow Susan "Across the Street."

When Susan had stamped the snow off her feet, and presented herself in the parlor, she gave such an account of the destitution of the Joneses as to enlist warmly all the kindly feeling of the Wood family; and when she added, "She was the same woman, ma'am, who begged so hard for work the other day," Mrs. Wood looked up from her sewing.

"And you refused it her, when you had so much on hand? Oh, wife!"

"I didn't know she was so destitute."

"Oh, I'm sorry. How many turkeys are there in the pantry, wife?"

"Three. My gracious alive, Mr. Wood, you're not dreaming of sending them a turkey?"

"Why not? It's a luxury they might have once a year, poor souls! Send them the small one; I gave but fifty cents for it."

"But it's extravagant; I never heard of such a thing," remonstrated the housewife.

But the children—children are always benevolent when there is no self-denial involved—took part with their father, and implored also that mother would put in the basket some jumbles and doughnuts to go in the little boy's stocking. "And tell Mrs. Jones that I'll be over

shortly, and see about finding regular employment for her."

The next morning the Woods went to church, and returned to meet a party of friends at dinner, who remained all the afternoon and half the night. And I have no doubt the family enjoyed their New Year's dinner and friends all the more keenly for the consciousness that their poor neighbor across the street was comfortably provided for. And they; how did they spend their New Year's? Why, in the morning the mother arose and kindled her fire, and set on her kettle, and swept up the room, and dressed her children in their clean clothes, and laid the cloth for breakfast; and after breakfast was over she put her little turkey in the oven to bake, leaving Willie to mind it, and went to church; also then returned, and dined upon her turkey, and spent the afternoon in telling stories to her children, watching the people go by, and particularly amusing herself with noticing the company go in and out of the house across the street.

The next day the snow was gone, and the winter sun shone out brightly. Just as the poor widow had finished cleaning up her house, and was getting ready to do some washing that had been sent her, there was a rap at the door, and Mrs. Wood entered.

"Take a seat, madam," said the widow, setting a chair.

"Thank you. You called at my house last week to get sewing to do—did you not?"

"Yes, madam."

"I had none ready then. I have brought you some

now, however. I am in no hurry for it. You can do it at your leisure—when you have no other work for other people on hand. There are two pairs of pantaloons and two jackets; how much will you charge?"

The woman looked at the garments, and then replied:

"I will do them for eighty-seven and a half cents; that is, three fips apiece for the jackets, and a quarter a pair for the trousers."

"That is cheap," thought the lady. "It would take me every evening for a fortnight to make these four garments."

"As it is so cheap, I will pay you now," said the lady, taking out a purse. She first thought of paying the woman a round dollar, but the spirit of economy prevailed —she made the precise change.

But Mrs. Wood went away determined to do as much as she could for the poor widow without injuring her own family, should an opportunity present itself.

Mr. Wood was more active in the service of the soldier's widow. He found out from her the name of the company to which her husband belonged, the date of his enlistment, etc., and soon discovered the fact that he had fallen at the storming of Monterey. Long inured to sorrow, the widow received the news of this bereavement very calmly. Mr. Wood interested himself further in her cause, and in a few weeks procured her the grant of a land warrant and pension. The land warrant she sold for a hundred and fifty dollars, and with this small capital she opened a thread and needle store. She is now

doing a fair business in a small shop. But, reader, there are many others, spread all over our city, who are suffering for work. Let them have it. Our city owes all its inhabitants a living; and there is work enough, if it were only equally divided and well remunerated, to supply every one with the necessaries of life.

"What can I do for you?" inquired a lady of distinguished benevolence, when she called to see a destitute widow with a handful of children.

"Give me work," was the literal answer of the poor, but high-principled woman. Give the poor work, that they may not need alms!

THE IRISH REFUGEE.

The only son of his mother, and she was a widow.—LUKE vii. 12.

Long years shall see thee roaming
A sad and weary way,
Like traveler tired at gloaming
Of a sultry summer day.
But soon a home will greet thee,
Though low its portals be,
And ready kinsmen meet thee,
And peace that will not flee.—PERCIVAL.

It was a lovely morning, that last Saturday in July, 1849. The sun had not yet risen when our family party, consisting of Aunt and Uncle Clive, Cousin Christine and myself, took seats at an early breakfast-table. A capacious carriage, well packed with presents for country cousins, stood at the door, ready to convey us to Virginia, to spend the month of August. We, a merry set of grown-up children, were too delighted with our prospective pleasure to eat anything, and so we soon left the table and put on our bonnets and hats, preparatory to a start. We entered the carriage.

"Now, then, are we all ready?" asked Uncle Clive.

"Yes," replied aunt.

"Has nothing been forgotten?"

"No—but stay! Where is Cousin Peggy's cap, Chrissy?"

"There—pinned up in that paper to the roof of the carriage. Don't hit your head against it, uncle."

"Clive, where did you put the basket of bread and butter and cold chicken?"

"There—in the bottom of the carriage. Be careful, now, my dear, or you will get your feet into it."

"No, I shan't. But hadn't you better put the bandbox with Martha's bonnet inside here?"

"Indeed, mother," interposed Miss Chrissy, "there is no room for it; for Cousin Peggy's bundle is on one side and the keg of crackers on the other; my feet are resting on the caddy of tea, and the loaf of sugar and paper of coffee are in my lap!"

"There! let's get along," said Uncle Clive, impatiently. "I declare, the sun is already half an hour high, and a ride of forty-five or fifty miles before us. We shall not reach Willow Glade before ten o'clock to-night."

"Yes, and about nine o'clock we shall be going down Bloody Run Hill, and I never can go through the piece of woods between that and Gibbet Hill after dark without horror."

"Ever since the peddler was murdered."

"Yes, ever since the peddler was murdered, and before, too."

Uncle Clive now jumped into his seat, and, taking the reins, we set off at a pretty brisk rate.

"Clive, don't that horse look a little vicious? See how he pricks up his ears!"

"Pooh! Nonsense! He's as safe a horse as ever drew."

"What o'clock is it, now?"

"Humph! half-past five. I think the next time we wish to get off at sunrise, we had better arrange to start at midnight; then, perhaps, we may succeed."

Turning the corner of the street at this moment the sudden sight of the river, and the wood on the opposite bank, glimmering and glistening in the light of the morning sun, elicited a simultaneous burst of admiration from our travelers. Then the prospective pleasures of the rural visit were discussed, the family and friendly reunions, the dinner parties, the fish feasts upon the river's banks, the oyster excursions and crab expeditions; and in such pleasant anticipations the cheerful hours of that delightful forenoon slipped away; and when, at last, the heat of the sun grew oppressive, and our sharpened appetites reminded us of the dinner-basket, we began to cast around for a cool, dry and shady spot on which to rest and refresh ourselves. The road here was wide and passed through a thick forest. A few more turns of the wheels brought us to a narrow footpath, diverging from the main road into the forest on the left-hand side.

"Let's get out here, Clive, and follow this path; I know it. It leads to a fine spring, with an acre or two of cleared land about it, on which there was once a dwelling."

This was agreed upon, and we all alighted and took the path through the wood. We had not gone many yards ere a scene of woodland beauty opened to our view. It presented an area of about four acres of open land in the midst of the forest. From the opposite side a little rivulet took its rise, and ran tinkling and splashing, in its pebbly bed, through the centre of this open glade, until its music was lost in the distance in the forest. But the most interesting object in sight was a ruined cottage. It was very small. It could not have contained more than two rooms. In front there had once been a door, with a window on each side; but now both door and windows were gone.

The solitary chimney had fallen down, and the stones of which it had been built lay scattered around. A peach tree grew at the side of the cottage, and its branches, heavy with the luscious fruit, drooped upon the low roof. A grapevine grew in front, and its graceful tendrils twined in and out through the sashless windows and the broken door. A bird of prey was perched upon the house, and, as we approached, with a fearful scream it took its flight.

"Be careful, Christine, where you step; your foot is on a grave!"

With a start and a sudden pallor, Christine looked down upon the fragment of a gravestone. Stooping and putting aside the long grass and weeds, she read: "The only child of his mother, and she a widow."

"Whose grave could this have been, mother? The

upper part of the stone, which should bear the name, is gone. Oh, how sad this ruined cot, and this lonely grave! I suppose, mother, here, in the heart of the forest, in this small cottage, lived the widow and her only child. The child died, as we may see, and she—oh! was the boon of death granted to her at the same moment? But, who were they, mother? As your early life was passed in this part of the country, you surely can tell us."

Aunt Clive, who had been gazing sadly and silently on the scene since giving the warning to Christine, said:

"Yes, I can tell you the story. But here comes your father, looking very tired and hungry; and, as it is a very sad tale, we will defer it until we have dined."

We spread our repast upon the grass, and, seating ourselves upon the fragments of the broken chimney, soon became engrossed in the discussion of cold chicken, ham and bread. As soon as we had dispatched them and repacked our basket, and while we were waiting for the horses to feed and rest, Aunt Clive told us the following tale of real life:

THE IRISH EMIGRANTS.

A short time previous to the breaking out of the Rebellion in Ireland a family of distinction came from that country to America and purchased and settled upon a handsome estate near the then flourishing village of Richmond. Their family name was Delany. With them came a Dr. Dulan, a clergyman of the established church. Through the influence of the Delanys, Dr. Dulan was

preferred to the rectorship of the newly established parish of All Saints, and subsequently to the president's chair of the new collegiate school of Newton Hall. This prosperity enabled him to send for his son and daughter, and settle with them in a comfortable home near the scene of his labors.

It was about the fifth year of his residence in Virginia that the rebellion in Ireland broke out, and foremost among the patriots was young Robert Dulan, a brother of the doctor. All know how that desperate and fatal effort terminated. Soon after the martyrdom of the noble Emmet, young Dulan was arrested, tried, condemned, and followed his admired leader to the scaffold, leaving his heart-broken young wife and infant boy in extreme penury and destitution. As soon as she recovered from the first stunning shock of her bereavement, she wrote to her brother-in-law, soliciting protection for herself and child. To this the doctor, who, to great austerity of manners, united an excellent heart, replied by inviting his brother's widow to come to Virginia, and inclosing the amount of money required to supply the means. As soon as the old gentleman had done that he began to prepare for her reception. Knowing that two families seldom get on well beneath the same roof, and with a delicate consideration for the peculiar nature of her trials, he wished to give her a home of her own. Selecting this spot for the beauty and seclusion of its position, as well as for its proximity to his own residence, he built this cottage, inclosed it by a neat paling, and planted fruit

trees. It was a very cheerful, pretty place, this neat, new cottage, painted white, with green window shutters; the white curtains; the honeysuckle and white jessamine, trained to grow over and shade the windows; the white paling, tipped with green; the clean gravel walk that led up to the door, the borders of which were skirted with white and with red roses; the clusters of tulips, lilies and hyacinths—all contributed to make the wilderness "blossom as the rose;" and every day the kind-hearted man sought to add some new attraction to the scene.

One evening the doctor had been over to the cottage, superintending the arrangement of some furniture. On his return home, a servant brought a packet of letters and papers. Glancing over one of them, he said:

"Elizabeth, my daughter."

A prim young lady, in a high-necked dress, and a close-fitting black net cap, looked up from her work and answered in a low, formal voice:

"My father."

"Your aunt and cousin have at length arrived at the port of Baltimore. They came over in the *Walter Raleigh*. I wish you to be in readiness to accompany me to-morrow when I go to bring them down."

"My father, yes," were the only words that escaped the formal and frozen girl.

A week after this conversation the still life of the beautiful cottage was enlivened. A lovely boy played before the door, while a pale mother watched him from within. That pale mother was not yet thirty years of

age, yet her cheeks were sunken, her eyes dim, and her hair streaked with silver. Truly, the face was breaking fast, but the heart was breaking faster. But the boy! Oh, he was a noble child! Tall for his age (he was but five years old), his dark hair, parted over a high, broad forehead, fell in sable curls upon his shoulders; his large black eyes, now keen and piercing as the young eagle's, now soft and melting as the dove's. His dark eyes wore their softest shade as he stole to his mother's side, and, twining his little arms around her neck, drew her face down to his, saying, with a kiss: "Willie is so sorry?"

"For what should Willie be sorry?" said the mother, tenderly caressing him.

"Because mamma is sad. Does she want Willie to do anything?"

"No, sweet boy, she wants nothing done that Willie can do."

"If mamma's head aches, Willie will hold it."

"Her head does not ache."

"If mamma wants Willie to stop teasing her and go to bed, he will go."

"You are not teasing me, dear Willie, and it is rather too early for you to go to bed."

The widow strove to chase the gloom from her brow, that she might not darken by its shadow the bright sunshine of her child's early life, and with an effort at cheerfulness she exclaimed: "Now go, Willie, and get the pretty book Cousin Elizabeth gave you, and see if you can read the stories in it."

Willie ran off to obey with cheerful alacrity.

The doctor was not able to do more for his sister-in-law than to give her the cottage and supply her with the necessaries of life; and to do this, he cheerfully curtailed the expenses of his own household. It was delightful to see the affectionate gratitude of the widow and child toward their benefactor. And that angel child, I wish I could do justice to his filial devotion. He seemed, at that early age, to feel as though he only lived to love and bless his mother. To be constantly at her side, to wait upon her, even to study her wants and anticipate her wishes, seemed to be the greatest joy of the little creature.

"Willie, why don't you eat your cake?" asked his uncle one day, when Willie had been sent over to the doctor's on an errand, and had been treated to a large slice of plumcake by his Cousin Elizabeth.

Willie silently began to nibble his cake, but with evident reluctance.

"Why, you do not seem to like it! Is it not good?"

"Yes, sir, thank you."

"Why don't you eat it, then?"

"My father," said Elizabeth.

"Well, Miss Dulan?"

"I think that Willie always carries every piece of cake he gets to his mother."

"But why not always prevent that by sending her a piece yourself?"

"Because, my dear father, I think it may be wrong to

restrain the amiable spirit of self-denial evinced by the child."

"Then you are mistaken, Miss Dulan; and recollect that it is very irreverent in a young lady to express an opinion at variance with the spirit of what her father has just said."

Elizabeth meekly and in silence went to the pantry and cut a piece of cake, which she carefully wrapped up and gave to Willie for his mother. Willie received it with an humble and deprecatory look, as if he felt the whole responsibility and weight of the reproof that had fallen upon his cousin.

One Christmas eve, when Willie was above seven years old, the widow and her son were sitting by the cottage hearth. The closed shutters, drawn curtains, clean hearth and bright fire threw an air of great comfort over the room. Mrs. Dulan sat at her little work-table, setting the finishing stitches in a fine linen shirt, the last of a dozen that she had been making for the doctor.

The snowstorm that had been raging all day long had subsided, though occasionally the light and drifted snow would be blown up from the ground by a gust of wind against the windows of the house. "Poor boy," said the widow, looking at her son, "you look tired and sleepy; go to bed, Willie."

"Oh! dear mamma, I am not tired, and I could not sleep at all while you are up alone and at work. Please let me stay up—but I will go to bed if you say so," added he, submissively.

"Come and kiss me, darling. Yes, Willie, you may stay up as long as you like. I will go to bed myself," added she, mentally, "so as not to keep the poor boy up."

"Well, Willie, I will tell you a story, darling, which will amuse you, while I sew."

Just at this moment the sound of carriage wheels, followed immediately by a jump from the box, and a smart rap at the door, caused the widow to start hastily from her seat. The door was opened, and Jake, the big black coachman of the old doctor, made his appearance, a heavy cloak and a large muffling hood hanging over his arm.

"Marm," said he, "it has clarred off beautiful, and massa has sent the carriage arter you, and he says how he would have sent it afore, but how the roads was blocked up with snowdrifts. Me and Pontius Pilate, and Massa John, has been all the arternoon a clarring it away, and I thinks, marm, if you don't come to-night, how the road will be as bad as ever to-morrow morning, with this wind a-blowing about the snow. Miss Lizzy has sent this hood of hern, and massa has sent this big cloth cloak of hizzen, so that you needn't ketch cold."

Mrs. Dulan did not immediately reply, but looked at Willie, and seemed to reflect:

Jake added:

"I hopes you'll come, marm, for massa and Miss Lizzy and Massa John has quite set their heads on having you with them to spend Christmas, and Massa John told me to tell you how he had bagged a fine passel of water-

fowl and wild turkeys, and I myself has made a trap for Massa Willie to catch snowbirds."

"Yes, we will go," said Mrs. Dulan. "Do me the favor, Jacob, to pour a pitcher of water on that fire, while I tie on Willie's cloak and mittens."

In twenty minutes more, Willie was seated on his uncle's knees, by his bright fireside, and his mother sat conversing with John and Elizabeth, and a few neighbors whom the inclemency of the weather had not deterred from dropping in to spend Christmas eve. The old housekeeper stood at the buffet, cutting up seedcake, and pouring out elder wine, which was soon passed round to the company.

That Christmas was a gorgeous morning. The sun arose and lit up into flashing splendor the icy glories of the landscape. From every roof and eave, from every bough and bush, dropped millions of blazing jewels. Earth wore a gorgeous bridal dress, bedecked with diamonds. Within the doctor's house everything was comfortable as you could wish. A rousing fire of hickory wood roared upon the hearth, an abundant breakfast of coffee, tea, buckwheat cakes, muffins, eggs, wild fowls, oysters, etc., etc., smoked upon the board. The family were all gathered in the breakfast-room. The doctor was serving out eggnog from a capacious bowl upon the sideboard.

"Cousin Elizabeth," said little Willie, taking her hand and leading her away to the sofa, "what do ladies love?"

"What do ladies love? Why, Willie, what a queer question."

"Yes, but tell me what do ladies love?"

"Why, their papas, of course, and their brothers, and their relations; it would not be decorous to love any one else," said the prim maiden.

"Oh, you don't know what I mean; I mean what do ladies love to have? You know boys like to have kites and marbles, and traps to catch snowbirds, and picture books, and half-pence and such things. Now what do ladies love to have?"

"Oh, now I understand you. Why, we like to have a good assortment of crewels and floss to work tapestry with, and a quantity of bright-colored silk to embroider with, and——"

"Oh, that's what you like, Cousin Elizabeth; but mamma doesn't work samplers," said the boy, with a dash of pettish contempt in his tone. "Uncle has given me a bright new shilling for a Christmas gift, to do what I please with, and I want to get something with it for poor, dear mamma."

"La! child, you can get nothing of any account with a shilling."

"Can't I?" said he, and his little face fell for an instant, but soon lighting up, he exclaimed: "Oh, ho! Cousin Elizabeth, I am brighter than you are, this time. A silver thimble is a very little thing, and can be bought with a shilling, I am sure; so I will buy one for mamma.

Poor mamma has an old brass one now, which cankers her finger."

"Here, Willie," said Elizabeth, "I have not paid you my Christmas gift, and you caught me, you know; take this shilling, and now run and ask your uncle to take you to the village with him when he goes, and then you can buy your thimble. You have enough to get one now."

Willie thanked his cousin with a hearty embrace, and ran off to do as she advised him. The family now sat down to breakfast, after which they all went to church, where the doctor performed divine service. A large party of friends and neighbors returned with them to dinner, and the remainder of the day was spent in hilarity and innocent enjoyment.

The next day the thimble was purchased, as agreed upon, and little Willie kept it a profound secret from his mother, until the first evening on which they found themselves at home, in their little parlor, when the candle was lit, and the little stand drawn to the fire, the workbox opened, and the old brass thimble put on. Then little Willie, glowing with blissful excitement, put his hand in his pocket to find his present. It was not there. He searched the other pocket, then his cap, then shook his cloak and looked about the carpet. Alarmed now, he opened the door and was going out, when his mother called to him.

"What is the matter, Willie? Where are you going? What have you lost?"

"Nothing much, mother; I am only going out a minute," and he closed the door, and began an almost hopeless search by the moonlight for his lost treasure. Up and down the walk he searched without finding it. He opened the gate, and peeping and peering about, wandered up the road, until his little feet and limbs got wet in the soft snow, and his hands became benumbed; when, feeling convinced that it was lost, he sat down and burst into a passionate fit of weeping. Let no one feel surprise or contempt at this. In this little affair of the thimble there had been disinterested love, self-sacrifice, anticipated joy, disappointment and despair, though all expended on a cheap thimble. Yet, Willie was but seven years old, and "thought as a child, felt as a child, understood as a child." I am a grown-up child now, and have had many troubles, but the most acute sorrow I ever felt was the death of my pet pigeon, when I was seven years old.

It was long before the storm in his little bosom subsided, but when at last it did, he turned to go home; he would not go before, lest he might grieve his mother with the sight of his tears. At last, weary and half-frozen, he opened the cottage gate and met his mother coming to look for him, and she, who always spoke most gently to him, and for whose dear sake she was suffering, now by a sad chance, and out of her fright and vexation, sharply rebuked him and hurried him off to bed. "If dear mamma had known, she would not have scolded me so, though," was his last thought as he sank

into a feverish sleep. The next morning when Mrs. Dulan arose, the heavy breathing, and bright flush upon the cheek of her boy, caught her attention, and roused her fears for his health. As she gazed, a sharp expression of pain contracted his features and he awoke. Feebly stretching out his arms to embrace her, he said:

"Oh, mamma, Willie is so sick, and his breast hurts so bad."

The child had caught the pleurisy.

It was late at night before medical assistance could be procured from a distant village. In the meantime the child's illness had fearfully progressed; and when at last the physician arrived, and examined him, he could give no hopes of his recovery. Language cannot depict the anguish of the mother as she bent over the couch of her suffering boy, and, if a grain could have increased the burden of her grief, it would have been felt in the memory of the few words of harsh rebuke when he had returned half-frozen and heavy-hearted from his fruitless search after the thimble, for the kind Elizabeth had arrived and explained the incident of the night.

* * * * * * * *

It was midnight of the ninth day. Willie had lain in a stupor for a whole day and night previous. His mother stood by his bed; she neither spoke nor wept, but her face wore the expression of acute suffering. Her eyes were strained with an earnest, anxious, agonized gaze upon the deathly countenance of the boy. Old Dr. Dulan entered the room at this moment, and looking down at

the child, and taking his thin, cold hand in his own, felt his pulse, and turning to the wretched mother, who had fixed her anxious gaze imploringly upon him, he said:

"Hannah, my dear sister—— But, oh, God! I cannot deceive you," and abruptly left the room.

"Elizabeth," said he to his daughter, who was sitting by the parlor fire, "go into the next room and remain with your aunt, and if anything occurs summon me at once; and, John, saddle my horse quickly, and ride over to Mrs. Caply and tell her to come over here."

Mrs. Caply was the layer-out of the dead for the neighborhood.

How tediously wore that dreary night away in the sickroom, where the insensible child was watched by his mother and her friend! The flickering taper, which both forgot to snuff, would fitfully flare up and reveal the watchers, the bed, and the prostrate form of the pale, stiff, motionless boy, with his eyes flared back with a fixed and horrid stare. In the parlor, a party equally silent and gloomy kept their vigil. Dr. Dulan, his son and the old woman, whose fearful errand made her very presence a horror, formed the group. The old woman at last, weary at holding her tongue so long, broke silence by saying: "I always thought that child would never be raised, sir—he was so smart and clever, and so dutiful to his ma. He was too good for this world, sir. How long has he been sick, sir?"

"Little more than a week; but I beg you will be silent, lest you disturb them in the next room."

"Yes, sir, certainly. Sick people ought to be kept quiet, though perhaps that don't much matter when they are dying. Well, poor little fellow; he was a pretty child, and will look lovely in his shroud and cap, and——"

"Hush!" exclaimed John Dulan, in a tone so stern that the woman was constrained to be silent.

Daylight was now peeping in at the windows. The doctor arose, put out the candles, opened the shutters, stirred the fire, and went into the next room. The widow was sitting in the same place, holding one of the boy's hands between her own, her head bowed down upon it. The doctor looked at the child; his eyes were now closed, as if in sleep. He laid his hand upon his brow, and bending down, intently gazed upon him. The child opened his eyes slowly. Passing quickly round the bed, the doctor laid his hand upon the recumbent head and said: "Look up, Hannah, your child is restored." With an ecstatic expression of gratitude and joy, the mother started to her feet, and gazed upon her boy.

"Kiss me, mamma," said Willie, opening his gentle eyes, in which beamed a quiet look of recognition and love. The mother kissed her child repeatedly and fervently, while exclamations of profound gratitude to Heaven escaped her. The doctor went to the window, and threw open the shutters. The rising sun poured its light into the room, and lit it up with splendor.

I must transport you now, in imagination, over a few years of time and a few miles of country, and take you into a splendid drawing-room, in the handsome court-

house of the Delany's, which, you remember, I described in the first part of this story, situated near the town of Richmond. On a luxurious sofa, in this superb room, reclined a most beautiful woman. Her golden hair divided above a high and classic brow, fell, flashing and glittering, upon her white bosom like sunbeams of snow. Her eyes—but who can describe those glorious eyes of living sapphire? Sapphire! Compare her eloquent eyes to soulless gems? Her eyes! Why, when their serious light was turned upon you, you would feel spellbound, entranced, as by a strain of rich and solemn music, and when their merry glance caught yours, you'd think there could not be a grief or a sin on earth! But the greatest charm in that fascinating countenance was the lips, small, full, red, their habitual expression being that of heavenly serenity and goodness.

Bending over the arm of the sofa, his head resting upon his hand, was a young man; his eyes earnestly, anxiously, pleadingly fixed upon the face of his companion, in whose ear, in a full, rich, and passionate tone, he was pouring a tale of love, hopeless almost to despair. The girl listened with a saddened countenance, and turning her large eyes, humid with tears, upon his face, she spoke:

"Richard, I am grieved beyond measure. Oh, cousin, I do not merit your deep and earnest love. I am an ingrate! I do not return it."

"Do you dislike me?"

"Oh, no, no, no, indeed I do not—I esteem and respect you; nay, more, I love you as a brother."

"Then, dear, dearest Alice, since I am honored with your esteem, if not blessed with your love, give me your hand—be my wife—and ultimately perhaps——"

"Horrible!" exclaimed the young girl, leaving the room abruptly.

"What the d—l does that fool mean?" exclaimed Richard Delany, as an angry flush passed over his face. "One would think I had insulted her. Colonel Delany's penniless dependent should receive with more humility, if not with more gratitude, an offer of marriage from his heir. But I see how it is. She loves that beggarly Dulan—that wretched usher. But, death—death to the poverty-stricken wretch, if he presume to cross my path!" and the clenched fists, livid complexion, and grinding teeth gave fearful testimony to the deadly hatred that had sprung up in his bosom.

At this moment Colonel Delany entered the room, and taking a seat, said:

"Richard, I have somewhat to say to you, and I wish you seriously to attend. You know that I am your best, your most disinterested friend, and that your welfare lies nearer to my heart than aught else earthly. Well, I have observed, with much regret, the increased interest you seem to take in your cousin—your passion for her, in fact. These things are easily arrested in the commencement, and they must be arrested. You can do it, and you must do it! I have other views for you. Prom-

ise me, my son, that you will give up all thoughts of Alice."

Richard, who had remained in deep thought during his father's address, now looked up and replied:

"But, my father, Alice is a very beautiful, very amiable, very intellectual——"

"Beggar!"

"Father!"

"Unbend that brow, sir! nor dare to address your parent in that insolent tone! And now, sir, once for all, let us come to the point, and understand each other perfectly. Should you persist in your addresses to Alice, should you finally marry her, not a shilling, not a penny of your father's wealth shall fall on an ungrateful son."

Richard reflected profoundly a moment, and then replied:

"Fear of the loss of wealth would not deter me from any step. But the loss of my father would be an evil, I could never risk to encounter. I will obey you, sir."

"I am not satisfied," thought the old gentleman, as he left his son, after a few more moments of conversation. "I am not satisfied. I will watch them closely, and in the course of the day speak to Alice."

An opportunity soon offered. He found himself alone with Alice, after tea.

"Alice," he commenced, "I wish to make a confidant of you;" and he proceeded to unfold to her, at some length, his ambitious projects for his son, and concluded by giving her to understand, pretty distinctly, that he

wished his son to select a wealthy bride, and that any other one would never be received by him as his daughter.

"I think I understand, although I cannot entirely sympathize with you, my dear uncle," said Alice, in a low, trembling tone. "All this has been said for my edification. That your mind may be perfectly at rest on this subject, I must say what may be deemed presumptuous: I would not, could not marry your son, either with or without your consent, or under any circumstances whatever."

"Alice! my dear Alice! How could you suppose I made any allusion to you? Oh! Alice, Alice!"

And the old man talked himself into a fit of remorse, sure enough. He believed Alice, although he could not believe his son. The old gentleman's uneasiness was not entirely dispelled; for, although Alice might not now love Richard, yet time could make a great change in her sentiments.

Alice Raymond, the orphan niece of Colonel Delany, was the daughter of an officer in the British army. Mr. Raymond was the youngest son of an old, wealthy and haughty family in Dorsetshire, England. At a very early age he married the youngest sister of Colonel Delany. Having nothing but his pay, all the miseries of an improvident marriage fell upon the young couple. The same hour that gave existence to Alice, deprived her of her mother. The facilities to ambition offered by America, and the hope of distracting his grief, induced

Mr. Raymond to dispose of his commission, and embark for the Western World. Another object which, though the last named, was the first in deciding him to cross the Atlantic. This object was to place his little Alice in the arms of her maternal grandmother, the elder Mrs. Delany, then a widow, and a resident under the roof of her son, Colonel Delany. A few weeks after the sailing of the ship in which, with his infant daughter, Mr. Raymond took passage, the smallpox broke out on board and he was one of its earliest victims.

With his dying breath he consigned Alice to the care of the captain of the ship, a kind-hearted man, who undertook to convey the poor babe to her grandmother. On the arrival of the infant at the mansion of Colonel Delany, a new bereavement awaited her. Mrs. Delany, whose health had been declining ever since her settlement in her new home, was fast sinking to the grave. Colonel Delany, however, received the orphan infant with the greatest tenderness. Sixteen years of affectionate care had given him a father's place in the heart of Alice. and a father's influence over her. Within the last year the sunshine of Alice's life had been clouded.

Richard Delany, the only son and heir of Colonel Delany, had been sent to England at the age of fifteen to receive a college education. After remaining eight years abroad, the last year of his absence being spent in making the grand tour, he returned to his adopted country and his father's house. He was soon attracted by the beauty and grace of Alice. I say by her beauty and

grace, because the moral and intellectual worth of the young girl he had not the taste to admire, even had he, at this early period of his acquaintance with her, an opportunity to judge. The attentions of Richard Delany to his cousin were not only extremely distressing to her, but highly displeasing to his father, who had formed, as we have seen, the most ambitious projects for his son. Richard Delany was not far wrong in his conjecture concerning the young usher, who was no other than our old friend William Dulan, little Willie, who had now grown to man's estate, the circumstances of whose introduction to the Delany family I must now proceed to explain.

To pass briefly over the events of William Dulan's childhood and youth. At the age of ten years he entered, as a pupil, the collegiate school over which Dr. Dulan presided, where he remained until his nineteenth year. It had been the wish of William Dulan and his mother that he should take holy orders, and he was about to enter a course of theological study under the direction of his uncle when an event occurred which totally altered the plan of his life. This event was the death of Dr. Dulan, his kind uncle and benefactor. All thoughts of the church had now to be relinquished, and present employment, by which to support his mother, to be sought. * * * It was twelve o'clock at night, about three months after the death of Dr. Dulan. The mother of William, by her hearth, still plied her needle, now the only means of their support. Her son sat by her side, as

of old. He had been engaged some hours in reading to her. At length, throwing down the book, he exclaimed:

"Dearest, dearest mother, lay by that work. It shames my manhood, it breaks my heart, to see you thus coining your very health and life into pence for our support; while I! oh, mother, I feel like a human vampire, preying upon your slender strength!"

The widow looked into the face of her son, saw the distress, the almost agony of his countenance, and, quickly folding up her work, said gently:

"I am not sewing so much from necessity, now, dear William, as because I was not sleepy, being so much interested in your book."

The morning succeeding this little scene, William, as was his wont, arose early, and going into the parlor, made up the fire, hung the kettle on, and was engaged in setting the room in order, when his mother entered, who, observing his occupation, said:

"Ever since your return from school, William, you have anticipated me in this morning labor. You must now give it up, my son—I do not like to see you perform these menial offices."

"No service performed for my mother can be menial," said Willie, giving her a fond smile.

"My darling son!"

After breakfast William took up his hat and went out. It was three hours before he returned. His face was beaming with happiness, as he held an open letter in his hand.

"See, mother, dear, kind Providence has opened a way for us at last."

"What is it, my son?" said the widow, anxiously.

"Mr. Keene, you know, who left this neighborhood about three years ago, went to —— County and established a school, which has succeeded admirably. He is in want of an assistant, and has written to me, offering four hundred dollars a year for my services in his institution."

"And you will have to leave me, William!"

These words escaped the widow, with a deep sigh, and without reflection. She added in an instant, with assumed cheerfulness:

"Yes, of course—so I would have you do."

A month from this conversation William Dulan was established in his new home, in the family of Mr. Keene, the principal of Bay Grove Academy, near Richmond.

The first meeting of William Dulan and Alice Raymond took place under the following circumstances. On the arrival of Richard Delany at home, his father, who kept up the good old customs of his English ancestors, gave a dinner and ball in honor of his son's coming of age. All the gentry of his own and the adjoining counties accepted invitations to attend. Among the guests was William Dulan. He was presented to Miss Raymond, the young hostess of the evening, by Mr. Keene. Young Dulan was at first dazzled by the transcendent beauty of her face, and the airy elegance of her form; then, won by the gentleness of her manners, the elevation

of her mind, and the purity of her heart. One ball in a country neighborhood generally puts people in the humor of the thing, and is frequently followed by many others. It was so in this instance, and William Dulan and Alice Raymond met frequently in scenes of gayety, where neither took an active part in the festivities. A more intimate acquaintance produced a mutual and just estimation of each other's character, and preference soon warmed into love.

From the moment in which the jealous fears of Richard Delany were aroused, he resolved to throw so much coldness and hauteur in his manner toward that young gentleman as should banish him from the house. This, however, did not effect the purpose for which it was designed, and he finally determined to broach the subject to his father. Old Colonel Delany, whose "optics" were so very "keen" to spy out the danger of his son's forming a mésalliance, was stone blind when such a misfortune threatened Alice, liked the young man very much, and could see nothing out of the way in his attentions to his niece, and finally refused to close his doors against him at his son's instance. While this conversation was going on, the summer vacation approached, and William made arrangements to spend them with his mother.

One morning William Dulan sat at his desk. His face was pale, his spirits depressed. He loved Alice, oh! how madly. He could not forego the pleasure of her society; yet how was all this to end? Long years must elapse before, if ever, he could be in a situation to ask the

hand of Alice. With his head bowed upon his hand, he remained lost in thought.

"Mr. Dulan, may our class come up? We know our lessons," said a youthful voice at his elbow.

"Go to your seats, boys," said a rich, melodious, kind voice; "I wish to have a few moments' conversation with Mr. Dulan," and Dr. Keene, the principal, stood by his side.

"My dear Dulan," said he, "you are depressed, but I bring you that which will cheer your spirits. I have decided to give up my school here into your sole charge if you will accept it. I have received, through the influence of some of my political friends, a lucrative and permanent appointment under the government, the nature of which I will explain to you by and by. I think of closing my connection with this school about the end of the next term. What say you? Will you be my successor?"

Dulan started to his feet, seized both the hands of his friend, pressed them fervently, and would have thanked him, but utterance failed. Dr. Keene insisted on his resuming his seat, and then added:

"The income of the school amounts to twelve hundred dollars a year. The schoolhouse, dwelling-house, with its outbuildings and numerous improvements upon the premises, go into the bargain. Yes, Dulan, I have known your secret long," said he, smiling good-humoredly, "and sincerely, though silently, commiserated the difficulties of your position; and I assure you, Dulan, that the greatest

pleasure I felt in receiving my appointment was in the opportunity it gave me of making you and Alice happy. Stop, stop, Dulan, let me talk," laughed Keene, as William opened a battery of gratitude upon him. "It is now near the end of July. I should like to see you installed here on the first of September. The August vacation will give you an opportunity of making all your arrangements. I must now leave you to your labors."

Every boy that asked to go out went out that day. Every boy that said his task got praised, and every boy that missed his lesson got blamed. The day was awfully tedious for all that, but evening came at last, and the school was dismissed. William, after spending an unusually long time in the "outward adorning," hastened with a joy-beaming countenance to the home of his Alice. In the full flow of his joy he was met by a sudden disappointment. The servant who met him at the door informed him that Colonel Delany, Miss Raymond and Mr. Delany had set off for Richmond, with the intention of staying a couple of weeks. Crestfallen, William turned from the door. This was only a momentary disappointment, however, and soon his spirits rose, and he joyfully anticipated the time of the Delany's return. They were to be back in time for the approaching examination and exhibition at Bay Grove Academy; and in preparing his pupils for this event, William Dulan found ample employment for his time and thoughts. I will not weary you with a description of the exhibition. It passed off in that school pretty much as it does in

others. The Delanys, however, had not returned in time to be present, nay, the very last day of William's stay had dawned, yet they had not arrived. William had written to his mother that he would be home on a stated day, and not even for the delight of meeting the mistress of his heart, the period of whose return was now uncertain, would he disappoint her. William was engaged in packing his trunk, when Dr. Keene, again the harbinger of good tidings, entered his room.

"My dear Dulan," said he, "I have come to tell you that the Delanys have arrived. You will have an opportunity of spending your last evening with Alice."

William shuffled his things into his trunk, pressed down the lid, locked it, and, hastily bidding his friend good-evening, took his hat and hurried from the house. Being arrived at Colonel Delany's, he was shown into the drawing-room, and was delighted to find Alice its sole occupant. The undisguised joy with which she received him left scarcely a doubt upon his mind as to the reception of his intended proposals. After a few mutual inquiries respecting health, friends, and so forth, William took her white hand in his, and said, or attempted to say —I know not what—it stuck in his throat—and he remained merely silent, holding the hand of Alice. There is something so extremely difficult about making a premeditated declaration of love. It is much easier when it can be surprised from a man. William knew the moments were very precious. He knew that Colonel Delany or his son might be expected to enter at any moment, and

there would be an end of opportunity for a month or six weeks to come; yet there he sat, holding her hand, the difficulty becoming greater every minute, while the crimson cheek of Alice burned with a deeper blush. At length footsteps approached. William heard them, and becoming alarmed, hastily, hurriedly, but fervently and passionately exclaimed:

"Alice, I love you with my whole heart, mind and strength. I love you as we are commanded only to love God. Dearest Alice, will you become my wife?"

"Miss Raymond," said Richard Delany, entering at this moment, "my father desires your presence instantly in his study on business of the utmost moment to yourself. Mr. Dulan, I hope, will excuse me, as we have but just arrived, and many matters crave my attention. Good-evening, sir," and, bowing haughtily, he attended his cousin from the room. William Dulan arose and took his hat to go.

"Farewell, Mr. Dulan," said Alice, kindly, "if we should not meet again before your departure."

"Farewell, sweet Alice," murmured William Dulan as he left the house.

* * * * * * *

It was a glorious Sabbath morning early in August. The widow's cottage gleamed in the dark bosom of the wood like a gem in the tresses of beauty. Everything wore its brightest aspect. The windows of the little parlor were open, and the songs of birds and the perfume of flowers were wafted through them. But the lit-

tle breakfast-table, with its snowy cloth and its one plate, cup and saucer, looked almost piteous from its solitude. Upon the clean white coverlet of the bed sat the widow's little black bonnet and shawl, prayer-book, and clean pocket handkerchief, folded with its sprig of lavender. It was Communion Sunday, and the widow would not miss going to church on any account. She dispatched her breakfast quickly—poor thing! she had not much appetite. She had sat up half the night previous, awaiting the arrival of William, but he had not come; and a man from the village had informed her that the mail-stage had arrived on the night previous without any passengers. As the stage would not pass again for a week, the widow could not expect to see or hear from her son for that length of time. After putting away her breakfast things, she donned her bonnet and shawl, and, taking her prayer-book, opened the door to go out. What a pleasant sight met her eyes. A neat one-horse carriage, or rather cart, stood at the door—her son was just alighting from it. In another instant he had clasped his mother in his arms.

"Oh! my William! my William! I am so glad to see you," exclaimed the delighted mother, bursting into tears. "Oh, but this is so joyful, so unexpected, dear William! I looked for you, indeed, last night; but, as you did not come, I gave you up, unwillingly enough, for a week. But come in, darling; you've not breakfasted, I know."

"No, dear mother, because I wished to breakfast with you; but let me give something to the horse, first, and

you sit in the door, dear mother—I do not want to lose sight of you a moment, while waiting on Rosinante."

"Never mind, William, old Jake can do that. Here, Jake," said she, as the old servant approached, "take charge of Master William's horse." Then turning to William, she said: "John sends old Jake over every morning to help me."

"Ah! How are Cousins John and Elizabeth?"

"Oh, very hearty. We shall see them this morning at church."

"I did not come in the stage yesterday, mother," said William, as they took their seats at the breakfast table, "because I had purchased this light wagon and horse for you to ride to church in, and I came down in it. I reached the river last night, but could not cross. The old ferryman had gone to bed, and would not rise. Well, after breakfast, dear mother, I shall have the pleasure of driving you to church in your own carriage!" added William, smiling.

"Ah! William, what a blessing you are to me, my dear son; but it must have taken the whole of your quarter's salary to buy this for me?" And she glanced, with pain, at his rusty and threadbare suit of black, and at his napless hat.

"Ah, mother, I was selfish after all, and deserve no credit, for I laid the money out in the way which would give myself the most pleasure. But, see, here is old Jake to tell us the carriage is ready. Come, mother, I will hand you in, and as we go along I will unfold to you

some excellent news, which I am dying to deliver." So saying, he placed his mother carefully in the little carriage, and seating himself beside her drove off, leaving old Jake in charge of the house.

"There is plenty of time, dear mother; so we will drive slowly, that we may talk with more comfort.

William then proceeded to relate, at large, all that had taken place during his residence at Bay Grove—not omitting his love for Alice, of whom he gave a glowing description; nor the bright prospects which the kindness of Dr. Keene opened before him. Then he described the beautiful dwelling which would become vacant on the removal of Dr. Keene's family, which was expected to take place some time during the coming autumn. To this dwelling, he intended to remove his mother, and hoped to bear his bride.

To all this the mother listened with grateful joy. At the church, William Dulan met again his cousins, John and Elizabeth, who expressed their delight at the meeting and insisted that William and his mother should return with them to dinner. This, however, both mother and son declined, as they wished to spend the day at home together.

William Dulan spent a month with his mother, and when the moment arrived that was to terminate his visit, he said to her:

"Now, dear mother, cheer up! This parting is so much better than our last parting. Now, I am going to prepare a beautiful home for you, and when I come at

Christmas, it will be for the purpose of carrying you back with me."

The widow gave her son a beaming look of love.

With a "Heaven be with you, my dearest mother," and "God bless you, my best son," they parted. They parted to meet no more on earth.

Let us now return to the mansion of Colonel Delany, and learn the nature of that "matter of the utmost moment to herself," that had summoned Alice so inopportunely from the side of her lover.

* * * * * * *

On reaching the study of her uncle, Miss Raymond found him in deep consultation with an elderly gentleman in black. Various packets of papers were before him—an open letter was held in his hand. He arose to meet Alice, as she advanced into the room, and taking her hand with grave respect, said:

"Lady Hilden, permit me to congratulate you on your accession to your title and estates."

"Sir! uncle!" exclaimed Alice, gazing at him with the utmost astonishment, scarcely conscious whether she was waking or dreaming.

"Yes, my dear, it is true. Your grandfather—old Lord Hilden—departed this life on the sixth of last March. His only living son survived him but a few weeks, and died without issue, and the title and estates, with a rent-roll of eight thousand pounds per annum, has descended, in right of your father, to yourself!"

"I shall have so much to give to William!" involuntarily exclaimed Alice.

"Madam!" exclaimed Colonel Delany in surprise.

Alice blushed violently at having thought aloud. "Dear sir," said she, "I did not know what I was saying."

"Ah, well, I suppose you are a little startled with this sudden news," said the Colonel, smiling; "but now it is necessary for you to examine with us some of these papers. Ah, I crave your pardon, Mr. Reynard—Lady Hilden, this is Mr. Reynard, late solicitor to your deceased grandfather, the Baron——"

Great was the excitement in the neighborhood when it was noised abroad that Alice Raymond had become a baroness, in her own right, and the possessor of a large estate in England. And when, for the first time since her accession to her new dignities, she appeared at church, in deep mourning, every eye was turned upon her, and she almost sank beneath the gaze of so many people.

In the height of the "nine days' wonder," William Dulan returned, and was greeted by the news from every quarter.

"Oh, Alice—lost! lost! lost to me forever!" exclaimed he, in agony, as he paced, with hurried strides, up and down the floor of his little room. "Oh, my mother, if it were not for thee, I should pray that this wretched heart of mine would soon be stilled in death."

If any human being will look candidly upon the events

of his own life, and the history of his own heart, with a view to examine the causes of suffering, he will be constrained to admit that by far the greater portion of his miseries have originated in misapprehension, and might have been easily prevented or cured by a little calm investigation. It was so with William Dulan, who was at this moment suffering the most acute agony of mind he ever felt in his life, from a misconception, a doubt, which a ten minutes' walk to the house of Coloney Delany, and a ten minutes' talk with Alice, would have dissipated forever.

If Richard Delany was anxious before to wed his cousin for love, he was now half crazy to take that step by which both love and ambition would be gratified to the utmost.

He actually loved her ten times as much as formerly. The "beggar" was beautiful, but the baroness was bewitching! Spurred on, then, he determined to move heaven, earth and the other place, if necessary, to accomplish his object. He beset Lady Hilden with the most earnest prayers, and protestations, and entreaties, reminding her that he loved and wooed her before the dawn of her prosperity, and appealed to her for the disinterestedness of his passion. But all in vain. He even besought his father to use his influence with Alice in his favor. Colonel Delany, his objections being all now removed, urged his niece, by her affection, by her compassion, and, finally, after some delicate hesitation, by her gratitude, to

accept the proffered hand of his son. But Alice was steadfast in her rejection.

"A change had come o'er the spirit of her dream!"

Alas, alas! that a change of fortune should work such a change of spirit! Alice Raymond was now Lady Hilden. Her once holy, loving, meek blue eyes were now splendid with light and joy. Upon cheek and lip, once so delicately blooming, now glanced and glowed a rich, bright crimson. Her once softly falling step had become firm, elastic and stately. "A peeress in my own right," was the thought that sent a spasmodic joy to the heart of Alice. I am sorry she was not more philosophical, more exalted, but I cannot help it, so it was; and if Alice "put on airs," it must not be charged upon her biographer.

Time sped on. A rumor of an approaching marriage between Mr. Richard Delany and Lady Hilden was industriously circulated, and became the general topic of conversation in the neighborhood. To avoid hearing it talked of, William Dulan seduloùsly kept out of company. He had never seen Alice since she became Lady Hilden. Dr. Keene had removed with his family from Bay Grove, and the principal government and emolument of the school had devolved upon young Dulan. The Christmas holidays were at hand, and he resolved to take advantage of the opportunity offered by them, to remove his mother to Bay Grove. On the last evening of his stay, something in the circumstance brought back forcibly to his mind his last conversation with Alice—that

conversation had also taken place on the eve of a journey; and the association of ideas awakened, together with the belief that he would never again have an opportunity of beholding her, irresistibly impelled him to seek an interview with Alice.

Twilight was fast fading into night. Lady Hilden stood alone, gazing out from the window of her uncle's drawing-room. She had changed again, since we saw her last. There was something of sorrow, or bitterness, in the compressed or quivering lip. Her eye was bright as ever, but it was the brightness of the icicle glancing in the winter sun—it was soon quenched in tears, and as she gazed out upon the gloomy mountain, naked forest, and frozen lake, she murmured: "I used to love summer and day so much; now——" [A servant entered with lights. "Take them away," said Alice. She was obeyed.]—"the dark soul in the dark scene—there is almost repose in that harmony."

"Mr. Dulan," said the servant, reappearing at the door, and Mr. William Dulan followed the announcement.

"You may bring in the light, now," said Alice.

"Will Lady Hilden accept congratulations, offered at so late a period?" said William Dulan, with a respectful bow.

Alice, who had been startled out of her self-possession, replied only by a bow.

"I was about to leave this neighborhood for a short time; but could not do so without calling to bid you

farewell, fearing you might be gone to England before I return." William Dulan's voice was beginning to quiver.

"I have no present intention of going to England."

"No? Such a report is rife in the neighborhood."

"One is not chargeable with the reports of the neighborhood."

Alice said this in a peculiar tone, as she glanced at the sorrow-stricken visage of the young man.

A desultory conversation ensued, after which William Dulan arose to take his leave, which he did in a choking, inaudible voice. As he turned to leave the room, his ghastly face and unsteady step attested, in language not to be misunderstood, the acuteness and intensity of his suffering. Alice did not misunderstand it. She uttered one word, in a low and trembling tone:

"William!"

He was at her side in an instant. A warm blush glowing over her bosom, cheek and brow, her eyes were full of tears, as she raised them to his face, eloquent with all a maiden may not speak.

"Angel! I love! I adore thee!" exclaimed the youth, sinking at her feet.

"Love me, William, only love me, and let us both adore the Being who hath given us to each other."

* * * * * * *

It was a cold night on the shores of the ice-bound Rappahannock. A storm of wind and snow that had been fiercely raging all day long, at length subsided. At a low cabin, which served the threefold purposes of post-

office, ferry-house and tavern, an old gray-haired man was nodding over a smoldering fire. His slumbers were disturbed by the blast of a stage horn and wheels of the coach, which soon stopped before the door.

Two travelers alighted and entered the cabin. The old ferryman arose to receive them.

"Any chance of crossing to-night, Uncle Ben?" inquired the younger traveler.

"He-he! hardly, Mr. William; the river has been closed for a week," chuckling at the thought that he should be saved the trouble of taking the coach across.

"Oh, of course, I did not expect to go on the boat; I was thinking of crossing on the ice."

"I think that would scarcely be safe, Mr. William; the weather has moderated a great deal since nightfall, and I rather think the ice may be weak."

"Pooh! nonsense! fiddle-de-dee!" exclaimed the other traveler, testily; "do you think, old driveler, that a few hours of moderate weather could weaken, effectually, the ice of a river that has been hard frozen for a week? Why, at this moment a coach might be driven across with perfect safety!"

"I shouldn't like to try it, though, sir," said the driver, who entered at this moment.

"The gentleman can try it, if he likes," continued the old man, with a grin, "but I do hopes Mr. Dulan won't."

"Why, the ice will certainly bear a foot-passenger safely across," smiled William Dulan.

"I dare say it may; but, at any rate, I wouldn't try it,

Master William—'specially as it's a long, dark, slushy road between here and the widow's."

"Why, Uncle Ben, do you think I am a young chicken, to be killed by wetting my feet?" asked William, laughing. "Besides, at this very moment, my good mother is waiting for me, and has a blazing fire, a pot of strong coffee, and a bowl of oysters, in readiness. I would not disappoint her, or myself, for a good deal."

"If it were not for this confounded lameness in my feet, I would not stop at this vile hole to-night," said the elder traveler, who was no other than Richard Delany, whom imperative business had called to this part of the country, and who had thus become, very reluctantly, the traveling companion of William Dulan.

"Nobody asked you, sir," exclaimed the old man, who did not seek popularity.

William Dulan, who by this time had resumed his cloak, and received a lighted lantern from the old ferryman, took his way to the river, accompanied by the latter. Arrived at its edge, he turned, shook hands with the old man, and stepped upon the ice. Old Ben remained, with his eyes anxiously strained after the light of the lantern as it was borne across the river. It was already half-way across—suddenly a breaking sound, a fearful shriek, a quenched light, and all was dark and still upon the surface of the ice; but beneath, a young, strong life was battling fiercely with death. Ah! who can tell the horrors of that frightful struggle in the dark, cold, ice-bound prison of the waters?

The old man turned away, aghast with horror, and his eyes fell upon the countenance of Richard Delany, which was now lit up with demoniac joy, as he muttered between his teeth:

"Good, good, good! Alice shall be mine now!"

* * * * * * * *

It was night in the peaceful cottage of the widow. All the little *agremens* her son had pictured were there. A little round-table, covered with a snowy cloth, stood in readiness. An easy-chair was turned with its back to the fire, and on it a dressing-gown, and before it lay a pair of soft, warm slippers. The restless, joyous, anxious mother was reading over, for the twentieth time, her son's last letter, in which he promised to be home, punctually, on that evening. Hours flew on, but he did not come. At length, one o'clock struck, and startled the widow from her meditative posture. "I must go to bed —I must not look pale with watching, to-morrow, and alarm my good son. It is just as it was before—he cannot get across the river to-night. I shall see him early to-morrow." Removing the things from about the fire, and setting the room in the nicest order, the widow retired to bed.

She rose early in the morning, to prepare a good breakfast for her son. "He shall have buckwheat cakes this morning; he is so fond of them," said she, as she busied herself in preparation.

Everything was in readiness, yet William came not. The morning passed on. The mother grew impatient.

"It is certainly high time he was here now," said she; "I will go through the woods, toward the high-road, and see if he is coming," and putting on her bonnet and shawl, she set out. She had just entered the wood when two advancing figures caught her attention. The path was so narrow that they were walking one behind the other.

"Ah! there he is—and John Dulan is with him," exclaimed the mother as they drew near.

The foremost man was indeed John Dulan, who held out his hand as they met.

"Ah! how do you do, John? How do you do? This is so kind of you! But, stand aside—excuse me—I want to see that youth behind you!" and the widow brushed past him, and caught to her bosom—old Ben, the ferryman.

"My gracious! I thought you were my son! Dear me, how absurd!" exclaimed the widow, releasing him.

"Let us go on to the cottage, aunt," said John Dulan, sadly.

"Yes, do. I am looking every minute for William. Oh, you can tell me, Uncle Ben—did he reach the ferry last night?"

"Yes, madam," groaned the old man.

"Why, you alarm me! Why didn't he come home, then?"

"He did try—he did try! I begged him not to—but he would! Oh, dear! oh, dear!"

"Why, what in Heaven's name is the matter? What has happened? Is my son ill?"

"Tell her, Mr. Dulan—tell her! I could not, to save my life!"

The widow turned very pale.

"Where is William? Where is my son? Is he ill? Is he ill?"

"My dearest aunt, do try to compose yourself!" said John Dulan, in a trembling voice.

"Where is my son? Where is he?"

"You cannot see him to-day——"

"Yet he was at the ferry-house last night! Great God! it cannot be!" cried the mother, suddenly growing very pale and faint. "Oh, no! Merciful Providence—such sorrow cannot be in store for me? He is not——"

She could not finish the sentence, but turned a look of agonizing inquiry on John Dulan. He did not speak.

"Answer! answer! answer!" almost screamed the mother.

John Dulan turned away.

"Is my son—is my son—dead?"

"He is in heaven, I trust," sobbed John.

A shriek, the most wild, shrill and unearthly that ever came from the death-throe of a breaking heart, arose upon the air, and echoed through the woods, and the widow sunk, fainting, to the ground. They raised her up—the blood was flowing in torrents from her mouth. They bore her to the house, and laid her on the bed. John

Dulan watched beside her, while the old man hastened to procure assistance.

The life of the widow was despaired of for many weeks. She recovered from one fit of insensibility, only to relapse into another. At length, however, she was pronounced out of danger. But the white hair, silvered within the last few weeks, the strained eyes, contracted brow and shuddering form, marked the presence of a scathing sorrow.

One day, while lying in this state, a traveling carriage drew up before the door, and a young, fair girl, clad in deep mourning, alighted and entered. Elizabeth, who was watching beside her, stooped down and whispered very low:

"The betrothed bride of your son."

The young girl approached the bed, and, taking the hand of the sufferer, exclaimed: "Mother, mother, you are not alone in your sorrow! I have come to live or die by you, as my strength may serve!"

The widow opened her arms and received her in an embrace. They wept. The first blessed tears that had relieved the burdened heart of either were shed together.

Alice never left her. When the widow was sufficiently recovered, they went to England. The best years of the life of Alice were spent in soothing the declining days of William Dulan's mother. The face of Alice was the last object her eyes rested on in life; and the hands of Alice closed them in death.

Alice never married, but spent the remainder of her life in ministering to the suffering poor around her.

I neglected to mention that, during the illness of Mrs. Dulan, the body of her son was found, and interred in this spot, by the request of his mother.

"What becomes of the moral?" you will say.

I have told you a true story. Had I created these beings from imagination, I should also have judged them —punished the bad and rewarded the good. But these people actually lived, moved, and had their being in the real world, and have now gone to render in their account to their Divine Creator and Judge. The case of Good *versus* Evil, comes on in another world, at another tribunal, and, no doubt, will be equitably adjudged.

* * * * * * *

As I fear my readers may be dying to know what farther became of our cheery set of travelers, I may, on some future occasion, gratify their laudable desire after knowledge; only informing them at present that we did reach our destination at ten o'clock that night, in safety, although it was very dark when we passed down the dreaded Gibbet Hill and forded the dismal Bloody Run Swamp. That Aunt Peggy's cap was not mashed by Uncle Clive's hat, and that Miss Christine did not put her feet into Cousin Kitty's bandbox, to the demolition of her bonnet; but that both bonnet and cap survived to grace the heads of their respective proprietors. The only mishap that occurred, dear reader, befell your obsequious servitor, who went to bed with a sick headache, caused

really by her acute sympathy with the misfortunes of the hero and heroine of our aunt's story, but which Miss Christine grossly attributed to a hearty supper of oysters and soft crabs, eaten at twelve o'clock at night, which, of course, you and I know, had nothing at all to do with it.

EVELINE MURRAY.

The body is more than raiment.—LUKE xii. 22.

"They laced her up, and starved her down,
To make her small and thin."—HOLMES.

"Oh! oh, dear! I shall die—indeed, I shall. I never can stand this bodice all the evening!" gasped a young girl, with the tears squeezed to her eyes. She was being inducted into her first ball-dress.

"Oh, yes! my love, you can," persisted her mother, as she labored to draw the hooks and eyes of the corsage together; "you have too stout a waist entirely; you must bear this!"

"But, oh! dear, oh! I can't indeed, I can't. I can't get my breath," gasped the girl.

"Oh, well! you must do as well as you can. Bear this pressure awhile, and then it will cease to feel uncomfortable. This stout waist of yours will give in and go down like, and then you will cease to feel giddy and sick; you will breathe easy; and then you will have a fine, round, slender waist, and a beautiful bust and shoulders!"

"But, oh! oh! mother! I'm sick, deadly sick. My head is swimming—I'm blind—and the room is turning round with me!"

"There! smell this salts; you'll feel better by and by, when your waist gives in and goes down."

How little did the mother know, or guess, that this sickness and giddiness was the protest of nature against the violence done her, and that this giving in and going down was the yielding and sinking of the vital organs, inflicting present discomfort, and involving, if persisted in, future loss of health and life! How should she? She was totally ignorant of the laws of health and life, and hugged her ignorance. She would have been shocked at the bare mention of a "Lecture on Physiology for Ladies." Poor mother! she loved that only child of hers tenderly. She would not have harmed her, directly or indirectly, knowingly, for her own soul's salvation. She would not suffer her to beat up a bed, run up or down-stairs, dip her hands in water until the chill was taken off, go out, however well wrapped up, on a windy day, or do anything else by which she fancied she might fatigue herself, worry herself, or give herself cold; for Eveline was consumptive, and all her sisters had died of consumption—all her fair sisters, beautiful girls, with such "fine figures;" but they had died, and Eveline, the youngest, only was left; and Eveline was the most beautiful and the least delicate of them all. And now, poor mother, she was unknowingly commencing the course that was to destroy the health of her fair Eveline, as it had destroyed the lives of all her other lovely girls.

"There! my little queen!" said the proud and affectionate mother, as she succeeded in hooking the bodice

of a beautiful tarleton dress over white satin. "There! who would not suffer a little pain for the sake of displaying a form like that?" She led her daughter up before a large mirror; and truly, the face and figure reflected there might well raise the flush of gratified vanity upon the young girl's cheek; the stately head, with its long ringlets of flashing gold; the childlike, the infantile face, with its broad, white forehead, its large, tender, dark-blue eyes; the crimson flush on cheek and lip; the arched neck, falling shoulders, round bosom, and tapering waist, and the graceful sweep of the dress from the corsage down.

"Now, my darling, how do you feel?" said her mother, raising the candle above her head to throw the most becoming light upon her.

"I think I feel better—I can bear it now," smiled Eveline.

"Don't you suppose Clem Dorsey will think you very much improved since he went away?"

Eveline blushed to the edges of her hair.

"Oh, dear, mother! I was only fifteen years old when he went away; that was two years ago. Do you really think—that he remembers me?"

"Remembers you, Eveline?" said Mrs. Murray, with a fond, quizzing smile upon her face. "Just as well as you remember him, little darling. Eveline! I don't intend to let you finally come out this winter; it is only because I know that you would like to see Clem Dorsey before he

goes to Florida that I sent for you from school, and permit you to go to this ball."

"Has he—has he—has he——"

"Has he called here since his return? Is that what you mean, my dear? Yes, once. He arrived Tuesday—he came here Wednesday—he passed on to Washington Thursday—and to-night he is expected here, to be present at this ball given in his honor."

"Will he attend it, mother?"

"Don't say 'attend,' my love, or 'mother;' both are vulgar. People 'go to' or 'assist at' balls, concerts, etc., and I am 'mamma.'"

"Then, mamma, will he 'go to' this ball?"

"Oh! without doubt, my dear. Now, love, sit down, and let me put on your slippers."

Here was another operation!

Mamma squeezed, and pressed, and grew red in the face; Eveline winced, and shrank, and fretted, until at last, with much pain and trouble, the small foot was incased in the smaller slipper.

And then the mother pressed the little feet together, and kissed them.

"How these little white birdies will flash and twinkle over the chalked floor to-night, Evay?"

And then she hugged up the satin-slippered feet under her chin, arose, put a few finishing touches to Eveline's toilet, and contemplated her child. Her child! She was a child herself—that simple-minded, single-hearted mother. Her whole life lay in her children. In their in-

fancy she had played with them, frolicked with them, reveled in their infantile innocence and vivacity; in their childhood she had shared their sports and their studies; in their girlhood, whether they liked it or not, she had entered heart and soul into all their fancies, flirtations, rivalries, loves, hopes, and fears—not always judiciously, however, though always disinterestedly.

Mrs. Murray was the widow of an army officer, and living on his half-pay. She had been the mother of four beautiful girls, three of whom had died between the ages of eighteen and twenty. Though but forty years of age, she was a pale, emaciated, withered and faded woman, herself a victim to the present atrocious mode of dress. She had imparted to her children from their very birth an unhealthy and imperfect organization, an aptitude for disease, and in her blind ignorance, following up the same destructive course with them that had destroyed her own health and beauty, she had hurried them off, one by one, into a premature grave, and religiously bowed before what she in her self-delusion termed the "will of God." "The will of God" is the happiness of his children; and they doubly err who wantonly or blindly bring calamity upon themselves, and then charge their misery upon Divine Providence.

Eveline Murray was a beauty. Her person was slight, but well covered with soft, round, elastic muscles, that turned the curved line of beauty in every graceful limb and motion. Her complexion was of that fair, clear, semi-transparent hue, that told at once of perfect health

and extreme delicacy of organization—a constitution sound, but fragile—one which judicious care might cultivate into robust health, or which neglect or maltreatment might quickly and easily undermine and break down.

Now, young ladies, before I go on with my story, I have a few words to say to you; and you must read it, and not skip it, for it is the real pill, and the story, though every word true, is only the sugar coat. There, now, do not scrape off the sugar, and throw away the pill. It is about your dress, of course, that I am going to speak. Presuming that gentlemen will take my warning at the head of this sketch, and not read it, I will speak plainly. It is true that some improvement has been affected in dress. Corsets and stays are no longer in vogue; the lungs, at least the upper portions of them, have something like fair play; but below the lungs are vital organs, that you may not compress with impunity; and these long-waisted, tight, very tight, whaleboned corsages are quite as destructive to health, beauty and life, through the injury they inflict upon these organs, as ever old-fashioned stays were, through fatal mischief done to the lungs. To tell you that by persisting in this ultra-fashionable style of dress, these horrid, long, tight waists, and heavy skirts, you will destroy your health and risk your life, would be no argument at all to you. You are willing to lose health and risk life for the sake of a fine figure. But suppose I tell you that you will lose not only health, but what you value infinitely more, beauty, and ultimately the rotundity

and graceful contour of that same "fine figure" for which you are willing to risk so much health and life? Why is it that your mothers and aunts, who at thirty-seven and forty ought to be as much handsomer than you girls of eighteen and twenty, as noon is brighter than morning, as summer is more glorious than spring (for there is an analogy running through all nature), because they are in the glorious noon of their day, the summer of their year —now, why is it not so? Why are they

"Old in youth, and withered in their prime?"

I will tell you. There are many reasons—such as neglect of regular exercise, bathing, fresh air, etc., etc.; the use of drying and astringent drinks, such as strong tea and coffee, and stimulating meats, etc. But more ruinous than any other of these sins of omission or commission is the barbarous style of dress now in vogue. I do not wonder that so many of us go off annually in consumption; but I do wonder how it is that we, with the same suicidal habits, escape death. You do not wish to grow old and ugly, do you, girls? You who are past twenty dread your thirtieth birthday worse than "plague, pestilence, or famine," don't you, girls? There is no need for this. Abandon, or considerably modify your present style of dress; that, and not years, destroys your youth, and health, and beauty. It is that abuse of yourselves that will make your cheeks grow pale, your muscles fail, your features become angular. On the other hand, if you will only use yourselves well, your freshness of complexion

and elasticity of muscle will last half a century. The freshness of complexion cannot be present without a free circulation of blood; the blood cannot circulate freely through a compressed waist, compressed feet, or compressed arms—hence pale and sallow complexions. The roundness, the elasticity, the spring of your muscles, depend upon the free, regular, and healthful action of the heart, lungs, liver, etc. These vital organs cannot act healthfully while habitually compressed together—hence falling muscles, hollow cheeks, emaciated limbs, etc.; hence disease, loss of beauty, premature old age, or death. Girls, do not wear these long, tight waists, and heavy skirts; they are destructive, fatal. This is not the place for physiological detail, else I might tell you precisely how it acts; but "for your own good," as my grandmother used to say when she read me a lecture—for your own good, I will refer you to my source of information. Read Dr. Fitch's "Lectures on the Heart and Lungs," or even "Calvin Cutter's First Book of Physiology for Common Schools"—read both, and mind the rules laid out there for the preservation of health, and I will guaranty that your fortieth birthday finds you in high beauty. Fifty is called the "grand climacteric" of life; and so it really should be. A century, a hundred years, is a round sum; I always fancied that ten or twenty years lopped off at the last end of it was an unnecessary loss of so much life. Let any young person of good constitution—(yes, or of bad constitution; I will not modify it, for a bad constitution can be made a good one by proper means

in youth)—let any young person set out with the determination that, with God's blessing, they will "live out their century" in full health, and preserve their beauty unimpaired up to the grand climacteric, and I believe they will be most likely to do it. The object is a much better one than the attainment of wealth or fame, which so many resolve and so many achieve; and the means are much more within your reach; and these means will not, as in the two other objects of wealth or fame, destroy, but increase your present comfort and cheerfulness.

To return from this long digression: Mrs. Murray had just finished Eveline's toilet, when a servant, entering the room, handed a card to her.

"Lieut. Clement Dorsey, U. S. A." read the lady. "There, now, Eveline, darling! has he forgotten you? Come, Eveline, let us go down;" and, taking her daughter's hand, she lovingly conducted her from the room.

They entered the parlor. A young man in full uniform of a lieutenant in the United States Army, arose from the sofa and advanced to meet them.

"Ah! how do you do, Mr. Dorsey?" said the lady, smilingly offering her hand; "this is Eveline."

"Ah! my old schoolmate, Eveline!" exclaimed the youth, gayly shaking hands with her.

After a little preliminary conversation, he blushingly tendered his services to escort Eveline to the ball; and the mother, who expected no less, smilingly consented.

When Eveline entered the ballroom on the arm of the handsome young officer, a buzz of admiration ran through

the crowd. "Who is she?" "Who is she?" was whispered by some. "Miss Murray." "Miss Eveline Murray," was the reply of those who knew her by sight. "What a magnificent girl!" "Splendid girl!" "What a form!" "What a fine figure!" "Yes! what a fine figure!" were the comments of several, murmured in a low voice, as she passed; and, though her sides were aching, and her stomach sick, from compression, and though her head was dizzy and her eyes dim, Eveline bore up and stepped more stately as she heard "fine figure," "fine figure," whispered, echoed and re-echoed through the room.

So Eveline was led to her seat, and soon led thence to the head of the quadrille that was forming, by the young officer. Of course the fine figure had to be displayed in motion. She expected to hear her dancing admired—for at school she was Monsieur Pace-a-way's most graceful pupil—but in this she was disappointed; no one remarked her dancing. Indeed, there were several girls in the room who had not fine figures, yet whose dancing was much more graceful than her own, and much more generally admired. In fact, she felt that the tightness of her corsage, armholes, shoes, etc., constrained the full freedom of her motions to a degree that precluded the possibility of dancing well. What she thus gained in the reputation of possessing a fine, or rather, a fashionable figure, she lost in estimation as a graceful dancer. She felt this. But there was another drawback upon her claim to general admiration that she did not feel—it was

this: notice it, young ladies, for I have observed it frequently among girls. The tightness of her dress, slightly affecting the stomach and head, spread a pallor and a languor over her features that detracted very much from the beauty of her countenance; while, as the evening progressed, her increasing sense of discomfort manifested itself in a fretfulness of expression upon her face that rendered it almost repulsive. The evening was at last over, and Mr. Dorsey prepared to conduct her home. When they were in the carriage:

"You looked very weary, Eveline; I am afraid that you stayed too long?"

"No;" said the fair girl, "I was not tired."

"You looked so."

"I am not much accustomed to these things," said Eveline; for of course she was not going to tell him that her dress was too tight.

"Ah!" exclaimed Mr. Dorsey, and the subject was dropped.

The carriage stopped before Mrs. Murray's door. It was nearly twelve o'clock at night. Mr. Dorsey handed Eveline in, and took his leave.

"And how did my darling like her first ball?" inquired the loving mother, as she set a glass of hot negus before Eveline, "to keep her from catching cold."

"Oh! mother, it was delightful!"

"And Mr. Dorsey?"

Eveline blushed and became silent.

"Well! Never mind, darling; but the ball?"

"Oh! it was splendid, mother!" exclaimed Eveline, who, having loosened her dress, and breathing freely, forgot her miseries. "It was very splendid; and, mother, everybody admired my figure so much!"

"I said so, my dear! I knew every one must."

"Oh! yes, mother, you should have heard them; it would have done your heart good; they all said—every one said—that I had the finest figure in the room."

"And you did not find your dress too tight?"

"Oh! yes, mother, it felt tight, but I supposed that that would wear off; and, mother, don't you think that you could take in this dress a little more under the arms, and make it still smaller? I think I could bear it still tighter!"

"Ah!" smiled the deluded mother, "I thought you would be willing to bear a little inconvenience for the sake of having the finest figure in the room!"

"And will you do it, mother?"

"Yes, love."

"And will you take in all my dresses, so that they may all fit like this—only smaller?"

"Yes, my dear!"

"This gives such a beautiful and graceful inward sweep, from the armpits to the hips."

"Yes, love; and you must wear heavy skirts, for they will help to pull your waist down."

How much mischief that first ball-dress had done—was still to do! Eveline naturally exclaimed against it, when first encased in it, but she had been persuaded; had been

screwed tightly up into it; had worn it to the ball; had heard her figure praised as the finest in the room, by the perverted taste of the crowd; had had her vanity stimulated by the flattery; and henceforth the fine figure, or rather the fashionable figure, was to be kept peerless in its proportions, at any cost of comfort, beauty or health; and Eveline's doom was sealed.

"I do not know what can be the matter with Eveline, Dr. Drugem. She has no appetite—no spirits; she is pale, weak, and losing flesh every day," said Mrs. Murray to the family physician, whom she had called in to prescribe for her daughter.

The doctor felt her pulse, looked at her tongue, inquired more particularly into her symptoms, and announcing that her liver was affected (no wonder, when it had been compressed so much), prescribed a compound pill of blue mass, quinine, etc. It is strange that doctors never prescribe loose dresses in such cases.

As might have been expected, blue mass, etc., only produced a temporary relief. The disease could not be cured until the cause was removed; and, so long as Eveline screwed her waist up to a span's circumference, so long continued the sick headaches, nervousness and languor. Perhaps the health and strength of a girl of stronger organization might have held out longer, but Eveline was naturally frail. Soon the figure, the very "fine figure," began to lose its beautiful lines of beauty, its contour became thin and angular, and its want of roundness had to be supplied by padding. This was worse. The weight

of thickly-padded corsages on the chest impeded her breathing, as the tightly screwed waist impeded the circulation; and everything in health depends upon free breathing and free circulation.

A year passed. Eveline was no longer beautiful in form or feature. She was thin and sallow; and both these deficiencies were very badly remedied by art. The medicines she took only did harm, for the reason, as I said, that the cause of her illness was not removed. At last Eveline was unable to go out of an evening. Then in a few months she was confined to her room during the greater part of the time. Still, with the fatuity of vanity and ignorance, she continued, whenever well enough to go into the parlor, to screw herself up in her whale-boned dresses. It was strange that no one seemed to suspect the cause of Eveline's ill health—no, not even the doctor—or, if he did, he certainly never mentioned it to her, or to her mother—just as now, there are hundreds of young ladies in ill health, who are nearly physicked to death, and whose parents and physicians never think of removing the cause of the illness—their tight dressing.

Eveline was confined to her bed, and every one said that she must die. She was emaciated until she looked like a skeleton, and had scarcely strength to raise her poor, bird-claw-looking fingers to her head. Her mother was in deep distress. She was about to lose her only child. Clem Dorsey also, who loved Eveline tenderly, and was hoping after a few years to make her his wife—Clem Dorsey grieved sincerely. He came every day, and

spent many hours by the side of Eveline's couch. He seemed to love to sit in her gloomy sickroom better than to go to all the parties and balls. What were balls and parties to him, while his dearly-loved Eveline was sick? Every day he brought her flowers, or fruit, or, when she was able to be amused, a pleasant book. And he would sit by her so patiently, so lovingly, all day long—and sometimes catch himself looking so earnestly, so sadly, in her poor, thin face—her face no longer pretty to any one but him. He thought it beautiful because he loved it. And how Eveline loved him! Surely, there never was a heart won under such circumstances.

"I shall pass away soon, dear Clem," she said one day, "but I shall never leave you quite. Oh! often, when you are alone in the deep midnight watch, I will be with you; and I tell you beforehand, dear, good Clem, because I want you to have faith; and when you feel my presence, do not say to yourself that it is fancy, for it will be Evy. And when you are summoned hence, Clem, I will be the first to welcome you to the spirit world. Do not feel afraid to die, Clem; for the eyes that close on the sick-room will instantly open on the better world—on me." And at such times Clem Dorsey would walk away to the window to conceal his agitation.

"Love my mother, Clem," she would say; "love my poor, childless mother."

One day, Clem Dorsey came to her with a book in his hand, looking cheerful. She raised her eyes, inquiringly:

"What is the matter, Clem?"

"I have found what I think will restore you to health, if you will follow the directions."

"Oh! some quack medicine!" said Eveline, with a faint, incredulous smile.

"Nothing of the kind, dear Evy, but an honest, good book, written, I think, by one who had the interest of his fellow creatures at heart. It is 'Dr. Fitch's Lectures on the Heart and Lungs.' Here are cases described, in which persons have been ill for years as you are—reduced to the point of death—some with one-half their lungs gone, who have been restored to health by reforming their habits and following the directions contained in this book. Here are authentic letters to prove it."

"Oh! that is like all quacks; they all work miracles—raise the dead, you know."

"Yes; but, my dearest Evy, this is to recommend no pills, potion, or lotion—only a manner of life, that will do the author of the book no kind of good if you follow it, and no harm if you don't, that I know of. The means are all in your own power, in your own room, one might say."

Then Clem turned to some of the lectures, and read them, with all their directions. These threw a flood of light into Eveline's mind, and revealed to her the whole cause and history of her complaint, as she had never understood it before—and hope sprung up in her heart. Clem Dorsey then, with his beautifully simple candor, said: "Now, Evy, there are other chapters you must read alone"—and he left the book with her.

From that day, Eveline made up her mind, with God's help, to get well. She cultivated free circulation of the blood, not having a single tight string or belt anywhere about her; and she cultivated free breathing—every day drawing as much pure air into her lungs and inflating every part of them as much as possible. She grew to understand that the restoration of her health depended upon the expansion of that very chest and waist that had been compressed so long; and just in proportion as her chest and waist expanded, her health returned—slowly, because a disease long coming on, is apt to be long going off. Eveline had been a year getting ill, and it took her a year to get entirely well. And, oh! it was delightful to observe the continued joy of her mother and of Clem Dorsey, in watching her recovery.

Eveline is now in high health. She was married last month to Lieutenant Clement Dorsey, U. S. A. The Rev. J. C. S. performed the ceremony, and Dr. B. gave away the bride. Eveline looked beautifully in her white satin and pearls. To be sure, she could not have spanned her waist with her ten fingers, now; but then her blooming complexion, bright eyes and the animation of her spirits were bewitching. Clem Dorsey looked very handsome in his blue suit, with white satin vest and stock, and white kid gloves. They live with Mrs. Murray yet, because Clem Dorsey expects soon to be ordered to go on distant service, and Evy is to remain with her mother until his return. They are very happy, and they have reason to be. Theirs was a true-hearted affection.

nurtured in sickness and sorrow, and is likely to last to the end of time—perhaps to the end of eternity.

Now, if there be one girl in ill health who reads this, I would entreat her to restore her strength by a reform in dress, diet, and habits. Instead of putting on strengthening plasters, put off tight-waisted dresses and tight shoes. Instead of taking medicine, take exercise; and above all, instead of compressing the waist, expand it, by drawing deep inspirations—giving the lungs free play, and plenty of good, fresh air. The lungs require pure, cool air, as the stomach requires pure, cool water; and if you wish for full and particular directions for restoring and preserving health and beauty, get and study "Dr Fitch's Lectures on the Heart and Lungs."

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